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OR
BENVENUTO CELLINI
HIS TIMES & HIS CONTEMPORARIES

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OR

BENVENUTO CELLINI

HIS TIMES AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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CHISEL, PEN & POIGNARD

OR

BENVENUTO CELLINI

HIS TIMES AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE LIFE OF SIR KENELM DIGBY," "THE LIFE OF A PRIG," ETC.

WITH NINETEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

TO A LADY.

Cellini sourirait à votre grace pure,
Et dans un vase grec sculptant votre figure,
Il vous ferait sortir d'un beau calice d'or,
D'un lys qui devient femme en restant lys encor,
Ou d'un de ces lotus qui lui doivent la vie,
Étranges fleurs de l'art que la nature envie.

—*Les Voix Intérieures.* VICTOR HUGO.

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PREFACE.

THIS book must doubtless risk the criticism that, if there were one man above all others concerning whom there was no need for anything more to be written, that man was Benvenuto Cellini, whose autobiography was pronounced by Horace Walpole to be "more amusing than any novel".

With the passing remark that Horace Walpole's idea of an amusing novel is likely to have been *The Castle of Otranto*, we may go on to say that the above criticism is open to both an objection and a reply. The objection is that such a criticism would practically admit the disqualification of all modern writers from expressing their opinions concerning people of the past, whenever those opinions have been founded upon records of high literary merit. The reply is that if ever there were a character which ought not to be estimated at its owner's valuation, that character was Benvenuto Cellini's.

Excellent and entertaining as is Cellini's autobiography, his much less known *Treatises*, although for the most part highly technical, contain many passages quite as good as anything in the *Life*, and they have been freely quoted in the present volume, to which, again, has been added information from various extraneous sources, bearing upon Cellini, his times and his contemporaries.

The *Vita* has been translated into English by Nugent, Roscoe and J. A. Symonds, the rendering of the last-named translator being far the fullest and the best. It has also been translated into German by Goethe and into French by Leclauché. An excellent English translation of the *Trattati*, from the pen of Mr. Ashbee, appeared in 1898.

Of critical works upon Cellini, the most elaborate is the splendidly illustrated *Benvenuto Cellini*, in French, by M. E. Plon.

Into the disputed question of the authenticity of the portraits of Cellini, which is discussed at great length in the pages of M. Plon, it has not been considered necessary to enter in these pages. Four are here given, representing him at various ages.

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CHAPTER I.

THE CELLINI AND THE MEDICI.

THE man, whose circumstances and surroundings form the subject of the following pages, sustained his own life with his chisel, took the lives of others with his poignard, and provided entertainment for future lives with his pen. His name was Benvenuto Cellini and he was born in Florence in the year 1500.

The recollection of the Renaissance, which such a statement inevitably awakens in the mind, will almost as inevitably recall to the memories of English readers two names, those of J. A. Symonds and John Ruskin. To the one the Renaissance was an emancipation of the intellect, enabling mankind to avail itself of the treasures of ancient art and literature; to the other it was a substitution of paganism for Christianity, of fashion for originality, and of knowledge at second-hand for knowledge self-discovered, the only knowledge, in Mr. Ruskin's opinion, of which man has any right to be proud.[1] To less enthusiastic students of the past, the Renaissance may appear to have been an incident which, like most human events, and for that matter like most human characters, ought not to be distinctly classed as "good" or "bad" without qualification.

[1] *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii., p. 57.

Other influences, besides the Renaissance, had lately changed, and were still changing, the circumstances of mankind at the opening of the sixteenth century. The invention of printing had been an event in comparison with which the Renaissance itself was a trifle; the practical use of the long-known [1] principle of the mariners' compass had recently doubled the world so far as its area was known to civilised man; and the development [2] of fire-arms was causing a revolution in the conditions of warfare.

In the realm of science, Copernicus was engaged upon his celebrated discoveries during Cellini's childhood; in that of politics, the crafty Machiavelli was at the same time plotting within Cellini's own city, and, in a sphere partly political and partly religious, the execution of Savonarola had caused intense excitement and fierce discussion only two years before Cellini's birth, and at his birthplace.

Cellini worked so much for Popes, Cardinals, and Bishops, and wrote so frequently and so freely about them, that they need some notice in a prelude to this humble treatise upon the artist and his times. Most people would seem to consider religion a topic ill-timed, improper, and even indecent, when introduced by anybody except themselves—then it is a different matter altogether—and its appearance in the first

[1] It is claimed by the Chinese that it was discovered by their ancestors 2000 years before Christ. But by their own account the Chinese would appear to have invented everything several thousands of years B.C. and then to have forgotten all about it.

[2] The Moors are said to have used artillery of some sort against Zaragossa in 1118, but field artillery was probably used for the first time in the fifteenth century. See Chesney's *Observations on Fire-arms.*

chapter of a book on secular matters might be sufficient to make many readers lay the volume down; but it may be respectfully submitted that the subjects of ecclesiastics and religion are not necessarily synonymous.

It so happened that Benvenuto Cellini was born during the pontificate of perhaps the most notorious Pontiff in the long list of successors of St. Peter. The infallibility claimed by Catholics for their Pope does not, of course, include impeccability; and the shortcomings of Alexander VI. are admitted by the warmest advocates of the papacy, who can well afford to make such an admission; for, of the 259 Popes who have occupied the papal throne during the nineteen centuries of the Christian era, only five or six have been charged with immorality,[1] even by the writers most hostile to the papacy. And, if the temporal powers of the Pope were sometimes used for such questionable purposes as to induce Ariosto to say of them:—

> He passed a heap of flowers, that erst distilled
> Sweet savours, and now noisome odours shed;[2]

it is none the less remarkable that under such a Pope as Alexander VI. the Church, in general, should have been so well governed as it was.

At the death of Alexander VI. Cellini was only four years old, and he lived in the pontificates of no less than ten Popes, most of whom came in for troublous times, since they witnessed that most remarkable religious revolution of the Christian era,

[1] *The Faith of our Fathers*, by Cardinal Gibbons, p. 147.
[2] *Orlando Furioso*, canto xxxiv.-lxxx. (Rose's translation).

the so-called Reformation, which began in Cellini's youth and was completed in his old age.

If the average Englishman were asked to name the great feature of the early part of the sixteenth century in Italy, he might not impossibly reply: "the immorality of the priesthood".

That the general immorality of that period was very great is unquestionable.[1] Whether it was worse in Italy than elsewhere, and if it were, whether the immorality was the result of the Renaissance, or whether the Renaissance was the result of the immorality, we will not pause to inquire. As to the immorality of priests, it is necessary to begin by qualifying the term by adding "some of the" priests, and then to go on to ask whether, at a time when licentiousness was so greatly prevalent, it can be a matter for surprise that some of those who entered the ranks of the clergy should have been still tainted by the pernicious atmosphere of their homes, or that they should have retained some of the evil habits of their youth.

In the study of such a character as that of Cellini, a man steeped in vice himself, and ever ready to impute vice to others, it is well, on the one hand, to be prepared to face the fact that a certain amount of immorality was existent among ecclesiastics, and, on

[1] The Catholic historian, Dr. Ludwig Pastor, in his *History of the Popes* (Antrobus's translation, vol. v., p. 113), says: "Undoubtedly of all the evils which darken Italian life in this period, the deadliest was the prevailing immorality. . . . Illegitimate children were not accounted any disgrace, and hardly any difference was made between them and those born in wedlock." Referring to the previous century, he says (p. 114): "When Pius II. came to Ferrara in 1459, he was received by seven princes, not one of whom was a legitimate son".

the other, to be guarded against exaggerations in the accounts of it. And let it be remembered that if the sixteenth century produced an Alexander VI., it also produced a St. Pius V., while the family of Borgia not only brought forth the ill-reputed Pope, but also the excellent St. Francis.

The times of Cellini may have been notorious for the predominance of vice and self-indulgence; but they were no less remarkable for the increase in the numbers of hospitals and beneficent institutions in Florence.[1] So great was the relief from extortion afforded by the then recently established Monte di Pieta, that a single Jewish money-lender offered the Florentine Government 20,000 golden florins to put a stop to it.[2] If the deeds of certain Italian ecclesiastics would not bear the light, there were at the same time monks at St. Mark's at Florence, at Monte Cassino, and elsewhere, who were setting examples of extraordinary virtue.[3]

The mania for everything classical and for things that were pagan, because they were classical, resulted in the introduction into churches of decorative figures, professing to represent saints and angels, but much more resembling the conventional ideas of sybils and cupids; yet there was never a time at which the art of painting more lavishly or more successfully produced works embodying Christian truths, history, and tradition. Nor would it be true to say that, if there were many priests of very strict life, they were exclusively to be found among the simple, un-

[1] Pastor's *History of the Popes*, vol. v., p. 61.
[2] Napier's *Florentine History*, vol. iv., p. 49.
[3] *Life of St. Philip Neri*, by A. Capecelatro, pp. 49, 64.

educated, and weak-minded, while all the men of ability and learning were saturated with the spirit of paganism. Cardinal Ximenes, a man of spotless morality, was distinguished for his literary culture, and Cardinal Cajetan was generally reputed to be the most learned and brilliant of all the theologians since the time of St. Thomas Aquinas.[1]

A subject, which engaged the attention of Cellini far more than religion, was art; and, in the whole history of art, no period was of greater interest or importance than his own. He lived in the days of Raphael and of Leonardo da Vinci; among his acquaintances was Titian, among his friends was Michael Angelo. The present church of St. Peter's[2] was begun in his infancy. The poet, Ariosto, was in the zenith of his fame during the first half of Cellini's life; the musician, Palestrina, became celebrated in its second half.

Let us pass over Cellini's little-to-be-credited boasts of ancestry. It is sufficient to remember that his father, Giovanni, was a professional engineer and an amateur musician. Nor need we dwell upon the details of his birth, beyond remarking that his father welcomed him as "Benvenuto," and gave him that welcome as a name at his baptism.

The dearest wish of Giovanni was that Benvenuto should choose music as his profession; but this was not at all to the tastes of the boy, which, like those of most sons, were the exact opposite of those of his progenitor. The lad succeeded in inducing his father

[1] Pastor's *Popes*, vol. iv., p. 85.

[2] The foundation stone was laid when he was six years old.

to place him under a Florentine goldsmith, named Michael Angelo, an artist[1] not to be confused with the great sculptor of the same name. This Michael Angelo was quite at the head of his craft in Florence; and he not only set gems with great skill in ladies' ornaments, but also designed and prepared bejewelled crests and helmets for knights to wear at tournaments.[2]

> . . . Shields, helms, and spears,
> Hung high, with diamonds flaming and with gold.[3]

As will by-and-by appear, his master's son, Baccio Bandinelli, eventually became Cellini's greatest and bitterest enemy.

Benvenuto Cellini tells us that his father was the "attached friend of the House of Medici," just as modern men in the position of humble dependants are fond of speaking of their haughty patrons behind their backs as "very old friends," and his own life is so connected with that family as to render it desirable to recall the reader's memory very briefly to a few of the details of its well-known history.

During the fourteenth century the democracy of Florence was chiefly disturbed internally by the disputes between the Guelphs, the party most faithful to the Pope, and the Ghibellines,[4] the faction most in favour of the emperor; but, in the fifteenth, a new

[1] Goldsmiths were classed among artists in Italy, and several became painters, among them being Orcagna, Ghiberti, Antonio del Pollainolo, Francia, Verrochio, and Andrea del Sarto.

[2] Vasari, iv., p. 232. [3] Milton.

[4] The reader scarcely needs reminding that Dante was an adherent to this party.

power began to assert itself. If the aristocracy of brewers was not to appear until four hundred years later, that of bankers had already come into existence. The banking trade of Florence was enormous ; among its clients were the kings of England, and, of all the Florentine bankers, the most affluent were the Medici, who at one time had sixteen branches in different parts of Europe.[1]

Great men of commerce, the Medici gradually grew into even greater citizens. They did not disturb the republic, nor did they take any special title, until their influence had become so paramount as to render them more like the Cæsars in their relations to the Roman Commonwealth, than like powerful members of a late medieval democracy.[2]

Respecting the political conduct of the Medici, posterity may hold various opinions ; but on one point no one can fairly deny them honour. As a family they were the greatest patrons of the arts and sciences that the world has ever known, and it is chiefly as patrons of art that we are to be brought in contact with them in these pages.

Few men did more to bring about the great classical revival, commonly called the Renaissance, than did Cosimo de' Medici,[3] who availed himself of his opportunities in having agents and correspondents in many parts of Eastern Europe, and even Asia, to collect manuscripts in the Hebrew, Greek, Chaldaic,

[1] Napier's *Florentine History*, iv., 33.

[2] Freeman's *General Sketch*, pp. 221, 222.

[3] He died long before the birth of Cellini. Later on we shall have much to do with another Cosimo, who became Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Arabic, and Indian languages.[1] As to the encouragement given by the Medici in later days to painters and sculptors, it is too well known to need description.

Giovanni Cellini had been much employed by Lorenzo the Magnificent before the birth of Benvenuto; but the star of the Medici was not then in the ascendant. Lorenzo's son, Pietro II., had been expelled from Florence two years before Benvenuto was born, and three years later he was drowned. Pier Soderini, who had meanwhile been made gonfaloniere of Florence, became almost as munificent a patron of Giovanni Cellini, and, we suppose, as "attached a friend," as had been Lorenzo de' Mèdici, and he wisely urged him to teach Benvenuto other arts beside music. To his own personal interests Pier Soderini was less alive, for he unfortunately consented to the holding of a Council of French Cardinals at Pisa. And thereon Pope Julius II. took the side of the Medici, and induced the Viceroy of Naples, who was general-in-chief of the army of the anti-French League, to enter Tuscany, depose Soderini, and restore the Medici.

When Benvenuto was twelve years old, Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, the second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent and afterwards Pope Leo X., entered Florence with his two nephews, one of whom was heir to the government, and Giovanni assumed the rule of the city during the heir's minority. At first all went well; but the very next year the influence of the Medici began to wane, again, and the republican

[1] Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, 66. One of Cosimo's librarians became a Pope—Nicholas V.—and founded the Vatican Library.

spirit to revive. At that time the Medici had lost much of their wealth, and they were only maintained as rulers of Florence by the support of the Pope and the anti-French League.

Then a dangerous conspiracy against the Medici was discovered, and among those supposed to be implicated in it was Machiavelli, who was arrested and tortured.[1]

The death of Pope Julius II. brought about a change in the fortunes of the Medici. Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici was elected Pope, and took the title of Leo X. This Pope began his ecclesiastical career very early in life. He received the tonsure at seven, he was made an Abbot—though only nominally, in order to be entitled to the revenue of a certain abbey—at eight, and he was created a Cardinal at thirteen, with the condition that he was not to take his seat in the sacred congregation until he was considerably older. Yet even twenty-five years later, when he was elected Pope, he was not a priest, nor was it till four days after the election that, at the age of thirty-eight, he was ordained to the priesthood.

With his election to the papacy the power of the Medici was restored at Florence; and great was the delight of the Florentines at the choice of their citizen as a Pope. It is said that 40,000 golden crowns were spent in erecting Leo X.'s arms over the churches, public buildings, and even private houses in the city. On the occasion of his first visit to Florence, as Pope, his reception was magnificent. A temporary façade in front of S. Maria del Fiore was painted by

[1] Napier's *Florentine History*, iv., 693.

Andrea del Sarto. Works by Cellini's future enemy, Bandinelli, decorated the streets.[1] The triumphal car was painted by Pontormo. Among the symbolical figures in the procession was a naked boy, completely gilded, to represent the age of gold. Medical science was not then sufficiently advanced to recognise the fatal effects of stopping the pores of the skin over the whole body, and the poor child died.[2]

A Genoese, who happened to be in Florence, witnessed these gorgeous demonstrations of pride and joy, and he cynically observed that, when Florence could boast of as many Popes as Genoa, its citizens would be better able to judge how far the influence of native pontiffs advanced the freedom of commonwealths.

The new Pope invited Giovanni Cellini to go to Rome and establish himself there; but love of home led him to reject an offer apparently so conducive to his interests.

It was then arranged that the young Lorenzo II. should rule Florence under the direction of Giulio de' Medici,[3] another Cardinal of that great family who was also destined to become a Pope; and this Cardinal practically exercised absolute sovereignty, obtaining great popularity among the Florentines by the mildness and equity of his government as well as by the sociability and urbanity of his manners. He appears to have been on friendly terms with the family of Cellini, and he soon did

[1] Roscoe's *Leo X.*, iii., 55-57. [2] Vasari, iv., p. 346.

[3] Natural son of Giuliano, a younger brother of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

them good service; for when Benvenuto Cellini and his brother were exiled from Florence, for taking part in a street quarrel, the good-natured Cardinal had them recalled. The Cardinal, however, advised Giovanni to send Benvenuto to Bologna, and there to place him under a music master.

At Bologna Benvenuto took a daily lesson in what he called "that accursed art," but he also worked under a goldsmith, and he certainly lived with, and may have studied under, an illuminator of great celebrity. If he did not give as much attention as his father could have wished to his musical studies, he pleased his parent in another way; for he began to earn money, both by his goldsmith's work and by his drawing; and of this money his father was ever graciously ready to partake.

Benvenuto's quick temper having caused him to take offence at home, not long after his return to Florence, he ran away to Pisa, where he worked under another goldsmith. There he fell ill of a fever and eventually went back to his father at Florence to recover from its effects.

Soon afterwards he was very near to coming, at the persuasion of Torrigiano, to the land of the people termed by that sculptor "those beasts of Englishmen," there to work for King Henry VIII. Benvenuto, however, took such a dislike to Torrigiano, that although he "felt a wish to go to England with him," he "now could never bear the sight of him".

As every one will remember, it was Torrigiano who broke Michael Angelo's nose—the nose of the great sculptor, and not that of the goldsmith—in

BENVENUTO CELLINI.
Engraved by Allegrini, after Zocchi.

the small chapel in the Carmine at Florence which contains the celebrated frescoes by Masaccio. "Clenching my fist," said Torrigiano to Cellini with great satisfaction when describing the incident, "I gave him such a blow on the nose that I felt bone and cartilage go down like biscuit beneath my knuckles, and this mark of mine he will carry with him to the grave," words which "begat in Cellini a hatred of the man."[1]

After finishing the well-known monument to Henry VII. in the Lady Chapel of Westminster Abbey, Torrigiano left England and went to Spain, where he made a statue of the Virgin for Duke Arcos. Judging from two enormous bags of money sent to him in payment for it, he imagined his fortune to be made, but on opening them he found the coins to be of the lowest possible value, and not worth in all thirty ducats, whereupon he broke the statue in his rage. In revenge, the duke accused him of heresy, for which he was thrown into the Inquisition, where he deliberately starved himself to death.[2]

Once more Benvenuto became angry with his father "for the same old reason of the music," an art which his parent persistently pressed him to adopt as his profession. To music in itself Benvenuto had no objection. On the contrary, after toiling with his chisel, he found it a recreation and a solace. But his father wanted him to make music his trade and his

[1] In most cases, where Cellini's own words are quoted without reference, they are taken from his autobiography, the renderings being either Mr. Symonds's or my own. When they are from the *Treatises*, their source is mentioned in a footnote.

[2] Vasari, ii., 485-488.

toil. Had they then been written, Benvenuto might aptly, if not very respectfully, have addressed his father in the words of Shakespeare :—

> Preposterous ass! that never read so far,
> To know the cause why music was ordained!
> Was it not to refresh the mind of man,
> After his studies, or his usual pain?

To escape this persecution Benvenuto once more ran away, and on this occasion to Rome. There he worked under an able maker of gold and silver vases and dishes, a branch of metal-work in which Cellini afterwards so greatly distinguished himself.

After two years of hard work, having earned some money, he returned to his home at Florence, where his father took his gold with benedictions, but tormented him again about "that accursed music".

Nothing could have been much worse than Cellini's education, from his own account of it. He was eternally pestered to study an art for which he had no liking and to adopt a profession which he detested. He was allowed to run away from home and to return when he chose, with impunity. When after an escapade of this sort he brought back any money, it was readily accepted.

Cellini was now twenty-three : age had not tempered his impetuosity, and soon after his return to Florence he got into another street broil, for which he was arrested and condemned to pay a heavy fine. On leaving the court he went to the house of his accuser and struck him in the breast with a dagger. Fortunately the clothes of his victim prevented the fatal result intended by Cellini. To escape the consequences of this attempted crime Cellini fled from Florence,

disguised in the habit of a friar, and, after various adventures, he went again to Rome.

Leo X. was dead ;[1] Adrian VI., who had succeeded him, reigned for only a few weeks ; and now another member of the Medici family, Cardinal Giulio, the ruler of Florence, had just been elected Pope, and had taken the title of Clement VII.

[1] He was said by some people to have been poisoned at the instigation of Francis I. See Napier's *Florentine History*, vol. iv., pp. 288, 289.

CHAPTER II.

MUSICIAN, GOLDSMITH AND ARTILLERYMAN.

BENVENUTO CELLINI reached Rome at a very favourable moment for a young artist. Art was then the fashion! Pope Leo X. (see plate ii.) had endeavoured to make Rome the general resort of painters, sculptors, architects and men of letters. More serious matters, however, had occupied the greater part of that Pope's attention. It was during his pontificate that Luther published his *Theses* (ninety-five in number);[1] and, if Leo X. was tolerant, gentle, and slow in moving against Luther, he at last issued the famous Bull of excommunication which Luther publicly burned.

[1] "I will not deny," says Cardinal Gibbons in *The Faith of our Fathers*, p. 434, "that Indulgences have been abused; but are not the most sacred things liable to be perverted? This is the proper place to refer briefly to the Bull of Leo X. proclaiming the Indulgences which afforded Luther a pretext for his apostasy. Leo determined to bring to completion the magnificent church of St. Peter, commenced by his predecessor Julius II. With that view he issued a Bull, promulgating an Indulgence to such as would contribute some voluntary offering toward the erection of that grand cathedral. Those, however, who contributed nothing, shared equally in the treasury of the Church, provided they complied with the essential conditions for gaining the Indulgence, the only indisputable condition enjoined by the Papal Bull were sincere repentance and confession of sins. D'Aubigné admits this truth, though in a faltering manner, when he observed that 'in the Pope's Bull something was said of the repentance of the heart and the confession of the lips'. The applicants for the Indulgence knew well that, no matter how munificent were their offerings, these would avail them nothing without true contrition of heart."

Alinari Photo.

POPE LEO X.

By Raphael, in the Pitti Palace, Florence.

Indeed it may be said that the Reformation began under this Pope. It was also during his reign that the great war broke out between the Emperor Charles V. and Francis I. of France, both of whom courted the alliance of the Pope.

In all this trouble and turmoil Leo X. found time for other pursuits.[1] He it was who engaged Raphael to paint frescoes in the Vatican, as well as to make a fresh plan for St. Peter's, and in every way that lay in his power he tried to further the causes of art and of science. He did much, again, to encourage church music, and he was well qualified to direct such an endeavour by his own scientific knowledge of harmony, his correct ear and his fine voice.

Leo X. was as fond of sports and pastimes as of arts and sciences. He was an excellent chess-player; he was an enthusiastic card-player, and he was devoted to hunting and hawking. A drawback in the last-mentioned amusements must have been his short-sightedness, which prevented him from seeing distant objects without a glass. He was undoubtedly fond of pleasure and excitement; and he may justly be quoted as a precedent by sporting ecclesiastics; but, to his credit be it spoken, even the Protestant historian, Roscoe,[2] declares him to have been, "not only in his early years, but after his elevation to the pontificate, an example of chastity and decorum."

[1] In his *Life of Leo X.* Roscoe says (vol. iv., p. 383): "That astounding proficiency in the improvement of the human intellect was made during the pontificate of Leo X. is universally allowed. That such proficiency is principally to be attributed to the exertions of that pontiff will now perhaps be thought equally indisputable."

[2] Vol. iv., p. 365.

Pope Clement VII. was as fond of art and of literature as Leo X., and he was well informed on many subjects, being able to "converse with the same technical knowledge on mechanics and hydraulics, as on questions of philosophy and theology".[1]

Cellini describes him as "an excellent connoisseur," and elsewhere,[2] he says of him: "Then came that luckless Pope Clement, and he helped and furthered the arts too, 'tis true, but he had so much adversity in his papacy, and there was so much trouble in the land, that he could never help as much as his kindly soul longed to do".

St. Peter's and the Vatican mean so much to the modern visitor to Rome that it may be worth considering their condition at the time of Cellini's second arrival in Rome. Four enormous piers, with the arches springing from them, standing high above their surroundings, were the only completed promise of the future St. Peter's. Walls in different stages of erection, and piles of masonry with the scaffoldings and ropes and tools and litter, which inevitably accompany the building of a large church, made a chaos of the space now occupied by what some critics have blamed as being too even and uniform an edifice. Raphael was dead, and the work—work which went but slowly—was carried on under Baldassare Peruzzi.

As the spectator approached the buildings of St. Peter's and looked to the right, he could see the newly finished Loggie of Raphael and the portion of the Vatican where stands the Sixtine Chapel, then

[1] Ranke's *Popes*, vol. i., p. 99.
[2] *Treatises*, p. 52.

less than fifty years old and undergoing decoration by Michael Angelo. Still further to the right, the Pauline Chapel and the Sala Regia were unbuilt, as also was the imposing pile of buildings now occupied by the Pope. Even the oldest part of the present Vatican Palace, the Torre Borgia, so called because it was occupied by Alexander VI., had only been built some seventy years.

Clement VII. was living in the Villa Belvedere, and Cellini writes of being summoned to his presence there. The Lateran Palace was more or less in ruins and the Quirinal Palace was not begun until three or four years after Cellini's death.

Nothing flattered the great patrons of art more than to see young students copying the pictures in their palaces, and when the wife of the rich Roman banker, Gismondo Chigi, found Cellini copying a recently finished fresco by Raphael, in her beautiful little villa Farnesina, she spoke encouragingly to him, and, on learning that he was a goldsmith, asked him to sketch a design for the setting of one of her jewels. This led to her giving him an order, and, when the work was finished, she asked his charge. He replied that her satisfaction was sufficient payment; money he did not desire.

"Friend Benvenuto," said the lady, "have you never heard it said that when the poor give to the rich, the devil laughs?"

"What a pleasure it would be to see the poor devil enjoying a good laugh, in the midst of all his troubles!" answered Cellini.

The next day the lady sent Cellini a very handsome present; and, on hearing of this, the master

under whom he worked was so filled with jealousy that he gave vent to a torrent of blasphemy. The next time Cellini met his patroness he said: "Ah, Signora, I wished to make the devil laugh: you have made him blaspheme worse than ever".

Instigated by constant letters from his father, Cellini continued to practise on his cornet, and his proficiency on this instrument becoming known, he was persuaded, sorely against his will, to practise with the Papal band, in order to play in it on one of the Pope's *festas*. When the performance had taken place, the Pope was delighted and inquired the name of the new cornet-player. On hearing that he was a son of Giovanni Cellini, whom he had known in Florence, he desired him to join his band permanently. A bystander remarked that Cellini was not a musician by profession, but a goldsmith. Thereupon the Pope said that Cellini should make plate for him as well as music.

This was really the beginning of his fortunes, and it is quite possible that he might never have attained his great celebrity in his favourite art, unless he had been brought to the notice of the Pope by means of "that accursed music," which he had hitherto regarded as the chief obstacle to the development of his beloved handicraft.

Considering Giovanni's anxiety that his son should adopt music as his profession, it might be thought that, by getting into the Pope's band, Benvenuto had done the best he could for his father; as a matter of fact, he nearly killed him; for so excessive was the old man's joy, on hearing the news, that it brought on a fit, which very nearly proved fatal.

Through the influence of his friend, Gio. Francisco Penni, one of Raphael's favourite pupils and assistants, Cellini obtained the patronage of the Bishop of Salamanca, a very rich and eccentric personage, who gave him an order to make a large silver ewer for holding water on his sideboard. Cellini's obligatory practisings with the Papal band — "my slavery to that accursed music," as he again calls it—robbed him of much valuable time which he would otherwise have spent upon the bishop's silver ewer. This loss of time annoyed Cellini, but the delay much more exasperated the bishop, who sent every day to inquire whether the vase was finished; and, when at length he received it, he exclaimed: "I swear that I will take as long in paying Cellini as he has taken to make it". This speech was reported to Cellini, who "fell to cursing all Spain, and everyone who wished well to it".

Now the handle of the silver vase had been made to work automatically by a very delicate spring, and one of the bishop's suite, in handling it, "with loutish violence" broke this spring. Forthwith the bishop sent the vase to Cellini with instructions to mend it as quickly as possible.

When the bishop's butler came to take back the silver ewer a few hours later, Cellini said that he would deliver it up on receiving payment for it—not before. The butler went away in a rage; and shortly afterwards the bishop's major-domo appeared with several Spaniards, threatening force. This party Cellini put to flight by pointing a loaded gun at them. Later still came Penni, through whom the order for the vase had been received, and he guaran-

teed that, if Cellini would take it to the bishop, the Bishop would give him the full payment.

When Cellini had presented himself with the silver ewer, the bishop "spouted out a torrent of such language as only priests and Spaniards have at their command," and ordered Cellini to write out a receipt. That, said Cellini, he would be delighted to do when he had received the money. At this "the bishop's rage continued to rise"; but, before the end of the interview, he paid the price of the vase in good coin.

This story was told to the Pope, who was greatly amused by it, and the bishop, hearing of the Pope's entertainment at his expense, although much annoyed, thought it judicious to try to secure Cellini's good will by promising him further orders. Cellini replied that he should ever be at his lordship's service, on one condition — that he should invariably be paid in advance!

Orders then came in from the Pope and from several of the cardinals.

In addition to the work which he did at their request in his own art, Cellini drove a brisk trade with his patrons in antique medals, cameos, and jewels, which he purchased from Lombard peasants. These peasants used to come to Rome at certain seasons to till the vineyards, and while digging in them they found many such treasures. On the other hand, the famous surgeon, Da Carpi, bought some small vases made by Cellini, and passed them off, in other parts of Italy, as antiques.

Cellini now began to earn a great deal of money, and he was very industrious. As a recreation he used to shoot pigeons among the ruins with a gun of his own

manufacture. He tells us that he always found his art progressing better when he went out often for a little fresh air, exercise, and amusement, by indulging in this sport, than when he spent the whole of his days in his workshop.

In the year 1523 the plague broke out with "such extraordinary violence," says Cellini, "that many thousands died of it every day in Rome". The miracle was that, with the then prevalent notions of doctoring, anybody should have recovered from it. Cellini's contemporary, the celebrated surgeon, Ambroise Paré, gravely tells us that a Scythian physician stopped an outbreak of plague in a certain city "by causing all dogs, cats, and such like beasts that were in the city, to be killed and casting their carcases up and down the streets, that so by the causing of this new putrid vapour as a stranger, the former pestiferous infection, as an old guest, was put out of its lodging, and so the plague ceased".[1] As signs of the approach of the plague, he mentions an unusual excess of either falling stars, mushrooms, or grasshoppers; and he says that some doctors held the opinion that every possible crevice, or other means of ventilation, ought to be carefully closed in the chambers of plague patients.

Another specimen of the medical knowledge of the times was afforded when the Italian doctor, Jerome Cardan, who was born only a year later than Cellini, and the Franco-Spanish physician, Cassanante, disputed as to whether the Archbishop of St. Andrews was suffering from a "distillation from the brain into

[1] His *Works*, trans. from the Latin, p. 494.

the lungs," or whether "the matter of the brain had become so rarefied that it showed unhealthy activity in absorbing moisture from other parts".[1]

Cellini himself was attacked by the plague. The father of his apprentice was physician to one of the cardinals, and the son asked his father to come and see Cellini, who, said he, was "in bed with some trifling indisposition".

When the doctor saw that it was a case of plague, he said he was ruined, as he dared not run the risk of carrying the infection to the cardinal.

"Why, father," replied the boy, "my master is worth far more than all the cardinals in Rome."

From that time the doctor remained with Cellini and nursed him until he recovered.

In order to recruit his strength Cellini went to stay with that rather affected artist, Il Rosso, at a place near to Civita Vecchia, where he rode about on "a little wild pony, covered with hair four fingers long, and exactly as big as a well-grown bear; indeed he looked just like a bear". While riding on the shore, Cellini was attacked by a band of ruffians, who had disembarked from a Moorish privateer, and he only escaped by the pony taking "an incredibly wide leap". Old Pepys would doubtless have added here: "This I take to be one of his devilish lies".

He was now working almost entirely as a goldsmith, and he had not yet embarked upon statuary. This, therefore, may be the best place for noticing his remarks on arabesques and grotesques. He says that arabesques are called grotesques "by the ignorant".

[1] *Jerome Cardan*, by W. G. Waters, p. 118.

Alinari Photo.

VASE.
In the Pitti Palace, Florence.
Ascribed to Cellini, or his School.

PLATE III.

This name of grotesques was given to them because they were found in certain subterranean caverns in Rome by students of antiquity, which caverns were formerly chambers, hot-baths, cabinets for study, halls, etc. As those vaulted rooms were commonly called "grottoes," the word "grotesque" was applied to the designs found in them—a wrong term, says Cellini; for the ancients "delighted in composing monsters out of goats, cows and horses," and called "these chimerical hybrids by the name of monsters".

As to the foliage used in design, Cellini says that the Turkish arabesques were "only composed of arum leaves with a few small sunflowers," while the Lombards constructed "very beautiful patterns by copying the leaves of briony and ivy in exquisite curves"; but the Tuscans and the Romans imitated "the leaves of the acanthus, commonly called bear's-foot, with its stalks and flowers curling in divers wavy lines, and into these arabesques one may excellently well insert the figures of little birds and different animals, by which the good taste of the artist is displayed". And here are to come in the "monsters," partly vegetable, partly animal, partly human. "Some hints for creatures of this sort can be observed in nature among the wild flowers, as, for instance, in snap-dragon and some few other plants, which must be combined and developed with the help of fanciful imaginings by clever draughtsmen."

In "fanciful imaginings" Cellini had few equals; in anatomy, with the exceptions of Michael Angelo and Giulio Romano, perhaps no superior, and his sensibility to every kind of physical beauty was intense.

It was in thought, in idealism, and in sensibility to

intellectual and moral beauty that he failed. He was entirely ignorant of the truth so well expressed by Young:—

> What's true beauty but fair virtue's face—
> Virtue made visible in outward grace?
> . . . . . .
> What's female beauty, but an air divine,
> Through which the mind's all gentle graces shine?
> They, like the sun, irradiate all between;
> The body charms, because the soul is seen.
> Hence men are often captives of a face,
> They know not why, of no peculiar grace:
> Some forms, though bright, no mortal man can bear,
> Some, none resist, though not exceeding fair.

In the faces of Cellini's figures, blank animal instinct takes the place of an expression of soul and intellect; and according to his own descriptions of his love affairs, mere animal appetite, totally devoid of any higher or more refined affection, was obviously the motive.

For a time, however, Cellini had to relinquish his art for rougher work. As he tells us, "the whole world was now in warfare".

We hear much in our days of heredity. Now, the most strongly marked propensity inherited in some families is that of marrying heiresses, and if there ever was a family in which this propensity was deeply engrained, it was that which produced Charles V. of Spain. The Low Countries, Burgundy, Castile and Austria, had all been added to its possessions by marriages, and through his maternal grandfather, Maxmilian, Charles V. inherited the empire. This title was disputed by Francis I. of France, and the consequent quarrel, combined with others, gave rise

to a violent war. To some extent the war was a continuation of the quarrel between the Houses of Anjou and Aragon for Sicily, as that in its turn had been a continuation of the older dispute between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines.[1]

Italy had become the battlefield of Europe. In the closing years of the fifteenth century Charles VII. of France had overrun Italy,[2] and had conquered Naples and lost it again. In the second decade of the sixteenth Francis I. invaded Italy in order to win the Duchy of Milan. In 1525 Charles V. of Spain conquered Francis I. and took him prisoner at Pavia, and although he liberated his captive, after making stringent terms with him, the war was renewed in the following year.

In 1521 Pope Leo X.[3] allied himself to Charles V. But his successor and relative, Pope Clement VII., took the side of Francis I., and just when Cellini spoke of the "whole world being in warfare," that most Catholic king and emperor, Charles V., was sending a mixed army of Lutherans and Catholics to invade and pillage the city of Rome, with the Pope himself inside it.

But this had not been the beginning of sieges and sorrows for Rome and for the Pope.

Little more than a few weeks earlier, Clement VII. had been besieged by the great Ghibelline family of Colonna, under Cardinal Pompeo Colonna, the ally of

[1] Such was Freeman's opinion. See his *General Sketch*, p. 255.

[2] It was during the consequent confusion that the Florentines seized the opportunity of turning out the Medici.

[3] Another of the allies of Charles V. was Henry VIII. of England, and it was in the same year in which Leo X. joined the alliance that he gave Henry VIII. the title of "Defender of the Faith" for his defence of the Church against Luther.

the emperor. On that occasion the Pope quickly came to terms with his enemy, but shortly afterwards, by the help of the Orsini, he attacked the Colonna, burned several of their villages and deprived Pompeo Colonna of his cardinal's hat. Cellini had been among the *bravi* hired by Alessandro del Bene, who appears to have made him captain of the little force which he engaged to defend his palace, after the fashion of Roman noblemen in times of war or tumult. When the second and great siege of Rome began, under the Constable of Bourbon, Alessandro took Cellini and the rest of his little band of warriors to help in the defence of the city walls, where Cellini asserts that he himself killed the Constable with a bullet from his arquebuse.

When the Papal forces were driven back from the walls by the besieging army and had been withdrawn into the Castle of St. Angelo, the Captain Pallone de Medici, says Cellini, "claimed me as being of the Papal household, and forced me to abandon Alessandro, which I had to do much against my will".

The allies of his holiness treated his people little better than did his enemies. Some troops, sent to Rome at his request by Giovanni de' Medici, made such disturbances in the city, says Cellini, "that it was ill living in open shops," and before long the Pope found their behaviour so intolerable that he disbanded and dismissed them. On the other hand the Duke of Urbino, who was expected to attack the Imperial troops on the Pope's behalf when on their way to Rome, failed to do so; but whether from laziness, or from cowardice, or from hatred to the house of Medici, has never been clearly demonstrated.

Concerning this sack of Rome the Archbishop Capecelatro writes: "A drunken, furious horde . . . slew, and sacked, and pillaged, and destroyed houses and palaces; they imprisoned and tortured the citizens, men, women and children; they profaned the churches with ostentatious sacrilege; the Blessed Sacrament, the relics of the saints, all holy things were desecrated and scattered about; priests and bishops were treated with every insult and indignity and cruelty, and other unutterable outrages not to be thought of without a shudder".[1] And these iniquities were perpetrated by the troops of a potentate who prided himself upon his devotion to the Church, to the Holy See, and to the Holy Father.

Meanwhile a desultory fire upon the soldiers of the emperor was kept up from the tower of St. Angelo; and Cellini was there employed as an artilleryman. His swagger about his feats in that capacity is in itself, to leave aside other internal evidence, enough to compel incredulity as to half, or more than half, the statements in his autobiography. "If I were to relate in detail all the splendid things I did in that infernal work of cruelty," says he, "I should make the world stand by and wonder." Most of his readers may be more ready to believe his admission that on one occasion Cardinal Orsini recommended that he should be hanged for firing a cannon contrary to orders.

One of the anecdotes of his feats reads funnily in these days of modern artillery. In the Prati—the meadow below the Castle of St. Angelo—Cellini

[1] *Life of St. Philip Neri*, p. 81.

observed a man dressed in red, at a distance allowing his features to be recognised, and determined to have a shot at him. For this purpose he selected a cannon called "a gerfalcon—a piece of ordnance larger and longer than a swivel, and about the size of a demi-culverin". A demi-culverin, it may be observed, was a long and slender nine-pounder. Cellini "aimed it exactly at the man in red, elevating it prodigiously, because a piece of that calibre could hardly be expected to carry true at such a distance". Of course the cannon ball hit the man! "One could see the fellow cut in two fair halves."[1] Cellini adds, "few were the shots of mine that missed their mark".

Notwithstanding Cellini's feats of arms, the condition of the Papal army within the fortress became desperate; therefore the Pope was anxious to secure the valuable Papal gems, and, for this purpose, he sent for Cellini, entrusted him with the tiaras and other Papal jewels, and ordered him to take from them all their precious stones. This he did very carefully, and, having wrapped them separately in pieces of paper, he sewed them in the clothes of the Pope and of his Cavalierino. Then he melted down the settings, which produced gold weighing about 200 lbs., and this he took to the Pope, except about 1½ lb., which he quietly pocketed, because he was not satisfied with the payment given to him by the Pope for his trouble. It is but fair to say that, some time

[1] A distinguished English regiment lately had, and probably still has, a MS. book, termed "The Lie Book," in which every uncredited story told by its officers was immediately written down with the name of the teller. Such a book might have been serviceable in the Castle of St. Angelo.

afterwards, he confessed this to the Pope himself and received absolution.

The terrible sack of Rome came to an end at last, peace was signed ; and soon afterwards Cellini went to Florence. As the plague was raging in that city, Cellini's father urged him to go to Mantua until it abated. Cellini acted upon his father's suggestion ; but, when he returned to Florence, he found that in the meantime his father had died of the plague. It is said that 40,000 people died of that dread disease in Florence in 1527.[1]

[1] Symonds in his *Life of Cellini*, p. 81, footnote. He gives Carpani as his evidence.

CHAPTER III.

TWO MURDERS.

IT may be observed here, for the benefit of readers unacquainted with Cellini's autobiography, if such there be, that the merest sketch can be given in these pages of the many incidents and details so graphically described in that entertaining volume. In its compilation Cellini employed, as his amanuensis, a youth named Michele di Goro Vestri, to whom he dictated the bulk of it; parts, again, he dictated to another secretary, and some of it he wrote with his own hand. Now it is remarkable that the general style of the book is not at all suggestive of dictated work. It runs on in the free and easy manner of a very chattering sort of talker, a manner to which pauses, and questionings such as "Have you written that yet?" and "How does the last sentence read?" would be fatal. Indeed a reader taking up the book, without introduction, would be much more likely to consider it too rapidly written, than to imagine that it had been produced by the slow and embarrassing medium of dictation.

Its style, on the contrary, is quite consistent with written recollections of autobiographical conversation; and, if such it be, it reflects great credit upon Michele di Goro Vestri. If that amanuensis possessed the ability which such a supposition would accord to him, the question might arise whether so gifted a writer

may not have made Cellini's good stories a little better with the help of his own imagination.

It is true that the style of the autobiography has much in common with that of the *Treatises*, which Cellini certainly wrote himself; but, while many parts of the *Treatises* are as smart as anything in the autobiography, they are far less embroidered with gossiping details. To a considerable extent their difference of subject would account for this; but, even when due allowance is made on this score, there appears to the present writer to be some slight variation between the mannerisms of the two works.

In any case Cellini must have seen the autobiography after it was written, since he submitted it to a literary friend for revision—a treatment which that friend declared would spoil its force and crispness—so that Cellini is responsible for its contents, whether true or false, and whether his own or another's.

When Rome had been sacked there were great rejoicings at Florence among the revolutionary party. After Cardinal Giulio de' Medici had given up the government of Florence to become Pope Clement VII., he had put aside the legitimate branch of the Medici family in favour of the reputed illegitimate descendants of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Alessandro de' Medici was called the son of Lorenzo II., who had succeeded his father Lorenzo the Magnificent in the governorship of Florence; and this Alessandro, a boy of eleven or twelve, was by Clement VII. appointed Governor of Florence, under the rule of the Cardinal of Cortona. Roscoe contradicts, as "very improbable, the ill-natured rumour that Alessandro was not the

son of Lorenzo II., but of Giulio de' Medici, who afterwards became Pope Clement VII.".

When the Florentine revolutionists learned that the Pope was besieged in the Castle of St. Angelo, the most notable citizens, arrayed in their civic robes, paid an official visit to the Cardinal of Cortona and compelled him to quit the city with the two young bastard Medici under his charge.[1] After their departure, Capponi was elected ruler of Florence and the people expected to have their wrongs speedily righted. They found their condition, however, to be in no way improved. If the Medici had taxed them heavily, taxes and compulsory loans were no less grievously imposed under the new rule.

More than thirty years earlier, under the influence of Savonarola, municipal legislation had attempted officious interference with private liberty as an antidote to luxury and vice; and, although these by-laws of the city had been somewhat relaxed under the Medici, many still remained in force, and others were now imposed by the new government. The dress, food, entertainments, and even the domestic arrangements of the Florentines were regulated by laws; and what made these laws more odious was that they limited the clothes, ornaments, food and luxuries of the citizens according to their stations in life.

Cellini arrived in Florence to find the Medici fled. Although his father was dead, his brother and sister begged him to remain in Florence instead of returning to Rome; and he was encouraged in his art by the

[1] Sismondi's *Italian Republics*, p. 343.

praise bestowed upon his work by Michael Angelo, the sculptor, who was then at Florence and was at work on the magnificent statues in the *Sagrestia Nuova* of San Lorenzo.

Just at this time Pope Clement VII. declared war against Florence, and his late enemy, Charles V., sent an army against that city in the Pope's name. Cellini tells us that he was now going "about with the highest nobility of Florence, who showed a unanimous desire to fight for the defence of their liberties". Orders were given to Cellini to serve in the militia for this purpose, and he apparently let it be understood that he proposed to be a zealous defender of the freedom of his native city; but whatever may have been his proclivities as a citizen, as a goldsmith he reflected that the Pope was his best customer; therefore after receiving two letters intimating that his holiness would give him employment, he slipped away quietly and returned to Rome. "When I got the second letter," says he,[1] "I made off as fast as I could, for of a truth those terrible radicals [*terribilissimi popolani*] then in power would have hanged me had they found it on me."

It was well for him that he left Florence. After an obstinate and distressing siege, the Florentines capitulated. Many of the leading citizens were executed. Michael Angelo, who had erected the most notable outwork in the suburbs, on the height of San Miniato, was only pardoned by the Pope on condition of working for him in Rome. While Michael Angelo was still undergoing the privations,

[1] *Treatises*, p. 67.

toils, and dangers of the siege of Florence, Cellini was peaceably and comfortably established at his artistic work in Rome. The Pope, whom he had found in bed with a slight indisposition, immediately gave him some orders for work to be executed in the handicraft for which he will probably be ever best known, namely, that of a goldsmith.

It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that in that particular workmanship he stands unrivalled. Yet even in saying this it is well to be temperate. Cellini lived in an age of great metal-workers. The so-called "Jane Seymour's Cup," by the painter, Hans Holbein, who was almost of the same age as Cellini,[1] is a proof, near home, that Cellini was not alone at a maker of fine plate. Some of the work of a similar kind by W. Jannitzer of Nuremberg, at the same period, is very beautiful. Cellini was closely rivalled, again, in the making of fine armour—an art of which he was very proud—by the Milanese, of whom he was exceedingly jealous, as we shall see in the present chapter. A splendid embossed steel breastplate, by the Milanese armourer, Paolo de Negroli (*circa* 1530-43), which was sold from the Magniac collection at Christie & Manson's in 1892, for 420 guineas, may be remembered by many readers.

Even of one of the gold or silver jugs, for which Cellini is generally admitted to be pre-eminent, modern critics[2] have written: "It is over-ornamented, and such as might have been expected from the

[1] Holbein was born two years earlier.

[2] Messrs. H. B. Wheatley and P. H. Delamotte, in *Art Work in Gold and Silver.*

Alinari Photo.

EWER.

In the Pitti Palace, Florence.

Ascribed to Cellini, or his School.

character of the man. He was a blusterer with but little consideration for any work but his own."

Cellini's remarks,[1] however, concerning another goldsmith are not uninteresting. After telling us that he could not "possibly recount all the Florentines who were adepts in the goldsmith's art," he mentions, among other foreigners, Albert Dürer, adding, "he too was a goldsmith, nor was he satisfied with niello only, he resorted in addition to his engraving, and did extraordinarily well in that line". It was the art of niello which had led to the discovery of that of the production of engravings on paper, and this discovery had been made only about half a century before the birth of Cellini.

Cellini himself describes niello work at some length.[2] It consisted in covering the incisions, or intaglio work, or engravings, as we may please to call them, on gold or silver plate, with the fine grains of an enamelling substance, for which Cellini recommends a mixture of silver, copper, and lead, with sulphur, and then exposing the plate to a heat sufficient to melt the enamel until it had filled the incisions. When the plate had cooled, the surface was rubbed smooth, and the designs appeared in a different colour from that of the plate.[3] A goldsmith named Finguerra found that the best way of trying the effect of the incisions before filling them with the enamel was to rub into them a mixture of oil and lamp-black, and then to lay over the plate a piece of damp paper, which took the impression. So good was the effect of these impressions upon paper, that it led

[1] *Treatises.* Translated by Mr. R. Ashbee, pp. 5, 6.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 8. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 8.

to the practice of cutting designs on metal for the sole purpose of taking paper copies from them. After saying that, in engraving, Albert Dürer was so skilful "that no one can hold a candle to him," Cellini adds: "Audrea Mantegni, our great Italian painter, tried it too, but couldn't do it,[1] so the less said about it the better".

Respecting Cellini's finer goldsmith's work we have to judge almost entirely from a number of pieces, scarcely one of which can be pronounced with certainty to have come from his own hand, or even from his own design. Of these there are several at Florence, catalogued as "School of Cellini"; and in private collections there are many more, either "attributed to Cellini," or boldly fathered upon him without question. No treatise goes into greater details concerning this matter than M. Plon's excellent work on *Benvenuto Cellini*.[2] Among the English collections he ruthlessly discredits the Queen's Nautilus Cup, the nation's graceful vase with subjects from Ovid, Lord Warwick's handsome goblet, and the Beresford Hope ewer, now the property of Baron Gustave de Rothschild; and he only admits the possibility, with something of a probability, of Cellini's workmanship in the beautiful pieces belonging respectively to Lord Salisbury and Lord Cowper.

Cellini had not been very long in Rome when an event occurred which led him into trouble.

Some Roman constables, in the fulfilment of their

[1] Vasari was of a very different opinion. See *Lives of the Painters*, ii., 271.

[2] *Benvenuto Cellini, Orfèvre, Médailleur, Sculpteur*, par Eugène Plon, Paris. E. Plon et Cie, 1883.

duty, were taking a prisoner through the streets. The prisoner's friends attempted to rescue him, and a constable, in repelling the attack, wounded to the death one of these unlawful combatants. Now the wounded man happened to be a friend of Cellini's brother, Cecchino, who, on hearing what had happened, sought the constable, and, without warning, "ran him right through the guts, and with the sword's hilt thrust him to the ground". Then Cecchino attacked another constable, an arquebusier, who "fired in self-defence," as he was perfectly justified in doing, and gave his opponent a wound from which he died. The constable therefore could not be blamed for killing Cecchino Cellini; but, as Pope puts it:—

> Not unappeased he pass'd the Stygian Gate,
> Who leaves a brother to revenge his fate.

Benvenuto Cellini brooded over the death of his brother; and, although he tried to distract his thoughts by hard work, he found himself "watching the arquebusier who shot his brother as though he had been a girl he was in love with". This condition of mind prevented him from sleeping and spoiled his appetite; therefore he determined to put a stop to it. He shall give his own account of the means he adopted to that end.

"It had just struck twenty-four, and the arquebusier was standing at his house door with his sword in his hand, having risen from supper. With great address I stole up to him, holding a large Pistojan dagger, and dealt him a back-handed stroke, with which I meant to cut his head clean off; but as he turned round very suddenly the blow fell upon

the point of his left shoulder and broke the bone. He sprang up, dropped his sword, half-stunned with the great pain, and took to flight. I followed after, and in four steps caught him up, when I lifted my dagger above his head, which he was holding very low, and hit him in the back, exactly at the juncture of the nape-bone and the neck." The result was fatal.

Cellini sought refuge in the palace of the Duke of Parma, in whose household his brother had lived; and the duke seems to have made out, and possibly he may have even believed, that Cellini slew the arquebusier in a hand-to-hand fight about the death of his brother.

This affair, in some form or other, came to the ears of Pope Clement. Just before it took place, Cellini had been going daily to the Pope about some work which he was executing at his orders; but, for eight days after he had killed the arquebusier, the Pope did not once send for him. When at last Cellini was summoned into the presence, "the Pope cast so menacing a glance towards him that the mere look of his eyes made him tremble". After some remarks about his work, the Pope said in a tone full of meaning: "Now you are cured, take care how you live," which was evidently intended to be understood: "I will not openly admit that I am aware of your offence; but, now that it has been overlooked, take care that you do not commit another".

Cellini was frightened, but not reformed; for another murder will have to be recorded against him.

A certain Milanese jeweller named Pompeo "was

in favour with the Pope" and was nearly related to his Holiness's first chamberlain and "most favoured servant". This man and Cellini quarrelled. The quarrel first arose over their rival designs for a clasp for one of the papal copes, that of Cellini having been given the preference. Thenceforth Pompeo hated Cellini.

Shortly afterwards the Pope made Cellini Stamp-Master to the Mint, for which he designed many beautiful coins. The Pope also gave him an order for a splendid golden chalice,[1] but Cellini professed inability to get on with the work for want of gold, declaring the quantity supplied by his Holiness to be insufficent. The truth was that no such want retarded his progress, and that he only pretended a want of gold because he was vexed with the Pope for giving another order to a Milanese jeweller named Tobbia instead of to himself. Therefore, on receiving a command from one of the Papal officials to hurry on with the chalice, he replied that he could not "make bread without flour," and he tells us that when this was repeated to the Pope his Holiness "flew into a bestial passion". This of course Cellini must have heard at second- or third-hand.

Now his enemy Pompeo happened to be at that moment in the Pope's presence; and, in order to revenge himself on Cellini, he said to the Pope: "If your Holiness were to deprive Benvenuto of the mint, perhaps he would take it into his head to finish the chalice".

The Pope acted upon this suggestion, and Pompeo

[1] It seems uncertain whether this was in reality a chalice or a monstrance for holding the Host.

went to Cellini and informed him of what had happened. It was now Cellini's turn to hate Pompeo.

"Tell his Holiness," replied Cellini, "that he has deprived himself and not me of the mint."

Who can wonder that Pompeo should have faithfully conveyed this message to the Pope? But Cellini seems to have been surprised, for he says: "The graceless and unlucky fellow went off like an arrow to find the Pope and report this conversation!" Naturally the Pope was angry, and he sent Pompeo to Cellini ordering him to give up the chalice, in whatever state it might then be, as he intended it to be finished by another goldsmith.

"This thing is not like the mint, which it was in his power to take away," said Cellini. "Five hundred crowns which I received from his Holiness I am ready to return; but the chalice is mine, and with it I shall do what I think best."

Three days later the Pope sent out two chamberlains with orders either to bring back the chalice or to arrest Cellini. The artist refused to give it up, saying: "I have brought it forward with great trouble, and I do not want it to go into the hands of some ignorant beast who will destroy it with little trouble".

The chamberlains then arrested Cellini and took him through the streets of Rome to the governor. There he was alternately threatened and coaxed to deliver up the chalice; and messages were taken backwards and forwards between the Pope and his goldsmith. Neither would yield; and at last the following compromise was arranged: Cellini was to put the chalice into a box and seal it; then he was to

send it to the Pope, who would thus get his way by receiving it; the Pope was to promise not to break the seal but at once to return it intact to Cellini, who would thus get his way also, as his Holiness would neither see nor handle the chalice.

The box, according to Cellini, came back from the Vatican opened, with a message from the Pope that he had "authority to bind and to loose things of far greater consequence than this," and an assurance that if Cellini would but finish it in reasonable time he should have plenty of gold to make it with. This story, be it remembered, must be regarded as Cellini's extravagant tattle, and not as history; but, if it were true, the Holy Father must have regarded the whole matter of the sealed box and the "loosening" in the light of a joke, whereas it was looked at from a very different point of view by Cellini, who tells us that he exclaimed: "I thank God that now I have learned and can report what the faith of Popes is made of". And thus apparently the farce ended.

Not so the ill blood between Cellini and Pompeo; nor was Pompeo Cellini's only enemy. One day a quarrel was going on in the street between Cellini and a man called Benedetto, who had till then been "a great friend of" his. Cellini "stooped and took up a lump of mud—for it had rained—and hurled it with a quick and unpremeditated movement at his face. Benedetto ducked his head, so that the mud hit him in the middle of the skull. There was a stone in it with several sharp angles, on one of which striking him, he fell stunned like a dead man; whereupon all the bystanders, seeing the great quantity of blood, judged that he was really dead."

Pompeo happened to be passing, and he went straight to the Pope and said: "Most blessed Father, Benvenuto has this moment murdered Tobbia; I saw it with my own eyes".

Tobbia, it will be remembered, was another Milanese goldsmith to whom the Pope had given an order withdrawn from Cellini. "On this the Pope in a fury ordered the governor, who was in his presence, to arrest and to hang Cellini at once, in the place where the homicide had been committed." This may sound an abrupt proceeding to modern ears; but it must be remembered that summary punishment was not uncommon in those times, and that the Pope knew how lately Cellini had committed another murder. He was not going to let him off a second time.

Having borrowed "the finest and the best" horse in Rome, and having armed himself with an arquebuse, "wound up in readiness to fire, if need were," Cellini made off to Naples. On his way thither he fell in with his friend Solosmeo[1] the sculptor, who told him that the Pope had sent one of his chamberlains with

[1] One bond of friendship between Cellini and Solosmeo was their common hatred of the sculptor, Baccio Bandinelli. Vasari (vol. iv., p. 264) says that, on one occasion, two cardinals were sitting at supper when Bandinelli came to see them about some of his work. They expressed a wish to hear Solosmeo's opinion of it, and, for that purpose, they sent for him. Meanwhile they made Bandinelli conceal himself behind a curtain. When Solosmeo arrived they plied him with wine, and asked him confidentially what he thought of Bandinelli. Solosmeo abused both the man and his work in unmeasured terms, until Bandinelli, unable to bear it any longer, rushed from his hiding-place in a fury. "What trick is this, my lords?" asked Solosmeo, and, adding, "I will have nothing more to do with priests," he ran from the room, to the intense amusement of the cardinals.

his condolences to the house of Tobbia; and that the chamberlain had come back and told the Pope that he found the "dead man" in perfect health, and hard at work. Turning to Pompeo, who was standing by, the Pope had said: "You are a good-for-nothing rascal; but I promise you well that you have stirred up a snake which will sting you; and it will serve you right". Then the Pope told the young cardinal, Ippolito de' Medici, to take care of Cellini.

Cellini had not been long at Naples before he received a letter from the cardinal ordering him to return at once to Rome, and on reaching it to present himself at the cardinal's palace. This mandate Cellini obeyed, and he was graciously received by Ippolito, who told him, however, to keep out of sight for the present, because the life of the man whom he had nearly killed was still in danger. In the meantime Cellini was to set to work upon a medal for the Pope.

On a certain ill-starred day, some time later, Cellini was sitting in the street with some friends when Pompeo went by. As he passed he stood still for some seconds, looked at Cellini, and "laughed derisively". Few things are so irritating as an insulting smile, and Cellini, on observing it, rose from his seat and followed Pompeo at a little distance. By-and-bye Pompeo went into an apothecary's shop, and, as he came out, Cellini drew a very sharp little dagger and tried to strike him in the face with it; but Pompeo turned his head away to avoid the point and received the thrust beneath the ear. Then his assailant stabbed him again and he "fell stone dead". Cellini professes not to have "meant to kill him; but as the saying goes, knocks are not dealt by measure".

And thus there was an end of Cellini's enemy Pompeo, the Milanese goldsmith. Of the consequences of this murder more will be told later.

Before closing this chapter another instance may be given [1] of Cellini's dislike of the Milanese goldsmiths, in his expression of delight that Henry VIII., King of England, should have been punished for his folly in dealing with one. That king gave a Milanese jeweller 9000 golden scudi for an emerald which was found, several years afterwards, to be a sham. It evidently gave Cellini great pleasure to record this fact, and, as several passages in his works exhibit his dislike of our nation, he was probably as much pleased at our English king being cheated as he was in gibbeting a Milanese jeweller as a cheat.

He may have had another reason for being pleased at Henry the Eighth's misfortune; for Henry, instead of encouraging the manufacture of beautiful church-plate, robbed the monasteries and churches of their gold and silver work to enrich himself with those metals by converting them into coin. As a modern writer [2] puts it: "The metal-work, the silver and gilt shrines . . . lamps, crucifixes, candlesticks, chalices . . . monstrances, pyxes, cruets, ewers, basins, the jewelled clasps for missals, antiphonaries and copes, all these works of art which, in Italy, were stimulating the genius of a Cellini, in England passed into the royal melting-pot, to the value of some £850,000 of present money".

[1] *Treatises*, p. 27.

[2] The Rev. S. Bowden, in *The Religion of Shakespeare*, p. 8.

CHAPTER IV.

QUARRELS AND INCANTATIONS.

POPE CLEMENT VII. knew Cellini to be a murderer and a thief. As Cellini himself admits, he had stolen some fifty pounds worth of gold when entrusted with the Papal jewels in the Castle of St. Angelo. It was but natural, therefore, that his Holiness should look upon him with some amount of suspicion.

Some time before the events recorded at the end of the last chapter, Pope Clement had sent a quantity of precious stones to Cellini to be mounted in plate, and a burglar, knowing of this, broke into Cellini's shop at night to steal them. He had pocketed a few unimportant trifles belonging to Cellini and was in the act of breaking open his safe when a large dog, which served Cellini both as a watch-dog at home and as a retriever on his shooting expeditions, flew at the housebreaker and put him to flight before he had found the Papal jewels.

The Pope, who had been reproached for entrusting such valuable gems to Cellini, heard that his shop had been broken into, and thought it not unlikely that Cellini had got up a pretended burglary in order to get the precious stones placed elsewhere on his own account, with the intention of pretending that he had been robbed. Cellini, hearing of the Pope's suspicions, set the gems as quickly as he could and went to the Vatican.

On his arrival, his Holiness "shot a furious glance at" him and exclaimed, "What have you come to do here? What is wrong?"

"Here are all your precious stones, and not one of them is missing," replied Cellini, displaying the piece in which he had set them.

Not very long after this event, Cellini, when walking through the Piazza Navona, perceived that some constables were conveying a prisoner under arrest. Cellini's dog flew at this prisoner and tried to tear him to pieces. It was all that his master could do to drag the dog away, and when he had done so Cellini said:—

"I feel certain that this must be the thief who broke into my shop; for my dog recognises him."

Then be released the dog, who once more flew at the prisoner. Shrieking for mercy the fellow cried out that he would confess the robbery and restore the things he had stolen if Cellini would but take away the dog that was biting him. Then the robber produced the few things which he had taken from Cellini's shop; and for this crime, and for the other on account of which he had been arrested, he was hanged in the Campo di Fiore.

The Pope suspected Cellini on another occasion. Some false money, stamped with Cellini's own dies, was being circulated in Rome. The master of the mint, who hated Cellini—Cellini was hated by not a few—told the Pope he had proofs that Cellini was the false-coiner. Clement sent for Cellini, "and leading cautiously in conversation to the topic of the coins, said to him at the fitting moment:—

"'Benvenuto, should you have the heart to coin false money?'"

In reply Cellini told the Pope that he made three crowns officially before dinner every day by setting dies to coin real money, and that this was much more than could be made in the same time by coining false money.

His holiness was quite satisfied by Cellini's answer and gave orders to his officers to search elsewhere for the culprit, orders which were carried out with such effect that the real culprit was soon caught, and hanged opposite the mint.

A great many coins were made for Clement VII. by Cellini. Of one of these he says[1]: "This coin brought me much honour, for I put great labour into it. As the Pope put more gold into it than its value warranted, it soon was melted down again." Of the reverse side of another coin he says that the design represented "St. Peter, just at the moment he has plunged into the sea at the call of Christ, and Christ stretches out His hand to him in most pleasing wise".

It would be useless to enter here into Cellini's instructions as to the making of coins; for he himself ingenuously says:[2] "True it is I could give you hundreds of little wrinkles yet, but I don't intend to do it, because I assume I am speaking to those who have some knowledge of the art, and for those who haven't it would be dreadfully boring to listen".

One of the pieces of work executed for Clement VII. which brought Cellini most celebrity was the

[1] *Treatises*, p. 68. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

large clasp for a cope. Now Cellini had[1] "so devised it that God the Father was seated on the big diamond," in the middle of this clasp, and He "was surrounded by a number of jolly little angels". This remark of Cellini's may give the reader some notion of the reverence and taste with which he approached sacred subjects. "The Pope," he goes on to say, "would scarce let three days pass without sending for me, and each time would he see first one, and then another angel baby peep forth, and this made him marvel greatly."

When the clasp was finished and delivered, the Pope said: "Were I but a wealthy emperor, I would give my Benvenuto as much land as his eyes could survey; but I am a needy, bankrupt potentate".

Perceiving, therefore, that he had little to expect in direct payment for his work, Cellini asked his Holiness for a mace-bearer's place, which happened to be vacant. The Pope gave him the appointment, which brought him in nearly 200 crowns a year, and kindly dispensed him from carrying the mace in processions.

On another occasion Cellini was less fortunate in his request. He was, at the moment, engaged on an exceedingly elaborate chalice for the Pope, and he asked him for a post in the Piombo.[2]

"That post in the Piombo," said his holiness, "is worth more than 800 crowns a year, so that if I gave it to you you would spend your time in

[1] *Treatises*, p. 50.

[2] The Piombo was the office in which leaden seals were appended to Bulls and instruments of State.

scratching your paunch, and your magnificent handicraft would be lost."

"Cats of a good breed mouse better when they are fat than when they are starving," replied Cellini. "Princes who provide men of talent with competences are watering the roots of genius. But since you will not give it to me, your holiness will do well to bestow it upon some man of genius instead of on some ignoramus, who will spend his time scratching his paunch, if I may be allowed to quote your Holiness's own words."

Immediately after finishing this speech Cellini made his bow, "and went off in a fury," leaving the Pope in little better humour.

"That devil Benvenuto will not brook rebuke," said his Holiness. "I was inclined to give the appointment to him, but he must learn not to speak so haughtily to a Pope."

Bastiano Veneziano[1] then asked for the post, which the Pope gave him, saying to one of the Papal officials: "Let Benvenuto know that it was he who

[1] He went, in consequence, by the name of Sebastian del Piombo. He had been a pupil of Giorgione, and he was employed by Michael Angelo to work on his designs (see Kugler's *Handbook of Painting*, book v.). A beautiful portrait of Cardinal Pole, at St. Petersburg, and the picture of Raphael and his fencing-master in the Louvre, both formerly attributed to Raphael, are now believed to be by Sebastian del Piombo. His celebrated picture in the National Gallery of the Raising of Lazarus, parts of which were drawn by Michael Angelo, needs no description for English readers. The Pope was right. After obtaining the appointment, Sebastian did little but "scratch his paunch". Vasari says (iv., 72): "This man had so much pleasure in gossiping and babbling that he would waste whole days therein". Yet he admits (67) that "Sebastian did surpass all others in painting portraits".

got the post for Bastiano, the painter; but that he shall have some good appointment for himself by-and-by. Meanwhile tell him to behave himself and to execute my orders."

The following evening the official in question[1] met Cellini and told him "in the most friendly manner" what his holiness had said.

"I shall work harder than ever for the Pope," answered Cellini, "but without being rewarded. I am certain to get nothing from him."

This reply was probably repeated to Clement VII., for he did not send for Cellini, or take any notice of him during the next two or three months. When the Pope did send for the artist to learn how the chalice was getting on, Cellini asked for an advance of 500 crowns.

"Go on with the work till it is finished," said the Pope.

"I will finish it if your Holiness will pay me for it!" said the goldsmith, who again left the presence in a bad temper.

Soon afterwards Clement VII. went to Bologna to meet the Emperor Charles V. Two meetings took place at Bologna between Pope and Emperor. At the first, the Pope, wearing the cope fastened by Cellini's famous clasp, in the centre of which blazed the splendid diamond of Charles the Bold, crowned the emperor with both an iron and a golden crown

[1] This was Bartolommeo Valori. He had been Pope Clement's commissary to the Prince of Orange during the siege. After having been a most devoted adherent to the Medici, he joined Filippo Strozzi in opposing their rule, and together with his son and his nephew he was beheaded in 1537.

Alinari Photo.

POPE CLEMENT VII. AND THE EMPEROR CHARLES V.
By Vasari, in the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

in the church of S. Petronio. It was a glorious occasion, but its glories were tarnished to Clement VII. by the news which there reached him. This news was that King Henry VIII. of England had determined to divorce himself from Katherine of Aragon in spite of the Pope. Within a few months Clement VII. excommunicated Henry VIII. So far as the turmoil of the "Reformation" was concerned, things were in a still worse condition when Clement VII. met Charles V. at Bologna, on the second occasion, in 1532.

During his absence, the Pope left Cardinal Salviati as legate in Rome, giving him instructions to keep Cellini "always going," so that the chalice might be finished on his own return.

"That beast of a cardinal," says Cellini, sent for him to bring his work for inspection. Cellini went, but without his work.

"Where is that onion stew of yours?" asked the cardinal.

"Oh, most Rev. Monsignor," replied Cellini, "my onion stew is not ready; nor can I finish it unless you give me the onions with which to make it."

Turning "uglier by half than he was by nature," the cardinal threatened to send Cellini to the galleys unless he did his work.

"I snap my fingers at your galleys," responded Cellini; "and what is more, I tell you that, owing to what you have said, I will not set hand to the chalice."

On the return of the Pope, Cellini received an order to go to him, and he declares that he found him "in the hottest rage imaginable".

"In God's truth, I tell thee," said his Holiness, "thou who makest it thy business to hold no man in honour, that, were it not for decency and order, I would have thee, together with thy work, chucked out of the window."

Cellini then informed the Pope that he had been prevented from working during his absence by inflammation of the eyes; and this brought about a truce between master and man.

At about this time Cellini fell in love with a beautiful Sicilian girl named Angelica—I have hitherto spared the reader the artist's dreary love affairs, or rather, it should be said, his most tedious immoralities—and Cellini determined to run away with the daughter, "unknown to her mother"; but the mother "getting wind of this," forestalled him, and ran away with her daughter, unknown to Cellini. When he heard of their departure, he followed them to Civita Vecchia, and "did a multitude of mad things to discover her; enough that he was on the point of losing his wits or dying". After two months Angelica wrote to Cellini, saying that she was in Sicily and extremely unhappy. Cellini by this time was indulging himself "in all the pleasures man can think of, and had engaged in another love affair, merely to drown the memory of his real passion".

Now "it happened through a singular variety of accidents" that he became intimate with a Sicilian priest, who was an adept in necromancy, an art, be it remembered, most strictly forbidden by his Church. Whether this priest concealed his necromancy from his ecclesiastical superiors and continued his sacerdotal functions we are not told. Had they known of it, he

would certainly have been suspended or disfrocked. Cellini having expressed a desire to witness an exhibition of it, the Sicilian said :—

"If you have the heart to dare it, I will amply gratify your curiosity," and he made an appointment for an incantation.

Accompanied by another dabbler in the black art, they went to the Colosseum at night; and the Sicilian, having arrayed himself in necromancer's robes, made circles on the ground and lighted a fire, into which he threw drugs, some of which emitted precious perfumes and others fetid odours. Then he began mysterious incantations. Presently he led his companions within one of the circles, and, when they had stood there for the brief space of an hour and a half, the magician announced that the Colosseum was full of devils, and he appealed to Cellini to ask them a question. Cellini did ask them a question, but the devils made no response.

The Sicilian said that they would do much better another night, if they could have a "little boy" with them. For this purpose Cellini selected one of his shop lads, and he also invited his friend Angiolo Gaddi.[1] The same ceremonies were per-

[1] Son of Taddeo Gaddi. Angiolo painted the walls of the chapel of the Holy Girdle at Prato, as well as the choir of S. Croce at Florence. His works of art display a love of allegory, which may go some way to account for his inclination to mystery and necromancy. Yet he was so far practical as to prefer money to art. "He painted," says Vasari (i., 253), "more because he desired to do as his forefathers had done, than from any love of the art, he having given up his mind to commerce, from which he gained still larger profits." Indeed his family became so rich and powerful as to be "among the most noble families in Florence" (Vasari, i., 229). Two of its members

formed as on the previous night ; and, between the "awful incantations" of the sorcerer in his robes, the mysterious fires and the "fetid odours," the little boy, tightly held by Cellini, was frightened almost out of his senses ; nor was he consoled by hearing the necromancer announce in a trembling voice that a thousand-fold more devils had arrived than he had asked for, among them being some of "the most dangerous of all the denizens of hell".

On hearing this, the poor little lad shrieked out in terror that a million fierce men were swarming round them and threatening them; and that "four huge giants were striving to force their way inside the circle". Even the allegorical painter, Angiolo Gaddi, "was more than half-dead with fear".

"Ask the devils something," cried the sorcerer.

"When shall I be reunited to Angelica?" exclaimed Cellini.

"In the space of one month you will be where she is," replied the sorcerer—not the devils.

The little boy now cried out that the whole Colosseum was in flames. "Meanwhile the necromancer kept doing his best with mild and soft persuasions to dismiss the demons," and he called upon his companions to fling more assafetida upon the burning coals.[1]

became cardinals. Their tombs are in the Gaddi chapel, in Santa Maria Novella.

[1] Burning strong-smelling drugs was an important part of an incantation. About a hundred years later, another clerical necromancer, the Rev. J. Evans, an Anglican clergyman, get into trouble with the devils, because "he did not at the time of his Invocation make any Suffumigation, at which the spirits were vexed". Like Cellini's friend, he drew a circle and made his visitors stand within it. Wood's *Athenæ Oxoniensis*, vol. i., p. 580.

Suddenly a nasty little incident, described in disagreeable detail by Cellini, made him laugh ; and, on hearing his master's merriment, the boy said that "the devils were taking to flight tempestuously". Then the necromancer packed up his diabolical paraphernalia and they all made their way home together, the little boy declaring that two of the demons kept "gambolling in front of them, skipping now along the roofs and now upon the ground". And each one of the party "dreamed all that night of devils".[1]

It was shortly after these incantation scenes that Cellini had left Benedetto for dead in the street and fled to Naples. Who should he see there but his Angelica? She greeted him "with infinite demonstrations of the most unbounded passion". As to what followed, I refer my readers to Cellini's own pages ; but, in order to complete the incantation story, I may add that "while drinking deep of this delight, it occurred to Cellini's mind how exactly on that day the month expired, which had been prophesied within the necromantic circle by the devils".

When the letter arrived from Cardinal de Medici calling upon Cellini to return to Rome, he made up his mind to take his Angelica with him and to leave her mother at Naples. The mother made no ob-

[1] Roscoe accounts for the appearances by saying that probably they were the phantasmagoria produced by a magic lantern "on volumes of smoke from various kinds of burning wood". But Sir David Brewster in his *Letters on Natural Magic*, pp. 74, 75, points out that the magic lantern was not invented till a hundred years later. In his opinion the appearances of the devils "were actual optical phantasms, or the images of pictures or objects produced by one or more concave mirrors or lenses," and reflected upon the dense smoke made by throwing perfumes upon burning wood.

jection provided Cellini would give her fifteen ducats. He "told the old harridan that" he would very gladly give her the ducats, if she would give him the daughter. Then Angelica begged him to buy her a "gown of black velvet, because the stuff was cheap at Naples". This reminded the mother that she also wanted a dress, and Cellini, perceiving that, between mother and daughter, this love affair promised to be very expensive, "having kissed Angelica," bade farewell to both of them. Thus they parted, Angelica "with tears, and I with laughter," says the unfeeling Cellini, who started at once for Rome.

Although generous—at least according to his own account—to his relations, Cellini seems to have been perpetually pressing his employers for money; and, if he is to be believed, they seldom paid him. When he had returned to Rome and been summoned for orders to the Vatican, he pleasantly reminded Clement VII. how that Pope had lately given orders that he should be hanged, "which made" the Pope "blush a little, as it were, for shame". Now this may be true; for it will be remembered that the Pope had condemned Cellini under a misapprehension, believing that he had just murdered Tobbia. When Cellini had taken his leave, the Pope said before all who were present that he was about to give Cellini enough money "to live wealthily without the need of working for any one but himself".

This good intention was never carried out. The next time that Cellini took some work to show Clement VII. he found him in bed and very seriously ill. Even with the aid of lights and spectacles the Pope could not see the medals or the dies. Three days

later the man whom Ranke calls "the most ill-fated pontiff that ever sat on the Papal throne" was dead; and thus Cellini says he was left with all his labour lost. Nevertheless he went to St. Peter's "and kissed the feet of the dead Pope, not without shedding tears".

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was common for anarchy to reign in Rome during a vacancy of the Papal see; and it was pending such a vacancy that Cellini murdered Pompeo, the Milanese goldsmith. In our day it is difficult fully to realise how far the general condition of lawlessness, which then prevailed on certain occasions, was looked upon as accounting for, if not exactly excusing, crimes of violence. One of these, as I have said, was the vacation of the Papal chair, when such was the wild riotousness prevailing that it was usual for Roman gentlemen to garrison their palaces with hired warriors, as a defence against the attacks of free-booters.

There appears to have been much ill-feeling between the Roman and the Milanese metal-workers; and, instead of its being regarded as a cruel murder, Cellini's slaughter of the famous Milanese goldsmith at once became the subject of a party dispute. Cellini tells us that two cardinals fiercely contended for the honour of giving him shelter, a piece of information which, like many of his statements, it may be wise to take *cum grano salis*.

A few days afterwards[1] Cardinal Farnese was elected Pope and took the name of Paul III. When

[1] 13th October, 1534.

he had time to attend to minor matters he was informed that the famous goldsmith, Cellini, was in hiding on account of his having killed Pompeo of Milan. The Pope replied that he had heard nothing of the death of Pompeo, but much of the provocation which he had given to Cellini; and, as acts of clemency became a new monarch, he, rather rashly perhaps, ordered a safe-conduct to be made out for Cellini on certain conditions.[1]

Standing beside the Pope was his confidential secretary, Ambrogio Recalcati, who was a Milanese, and he warned the Pope against granting pardons too freely, so early in his Papacy.

Ceilini states that the Pope then said: "You know less about such matters than I do. Men like Benvenuto, unique in their profession, stand above the law; and how far more he, then, who received the provocation I have heard of?"

If this speech, which Cellini only professes to have heard through a third person, was ever made, Paul III. probably intended it as a piece of banter for his very intimate secretary, and had no idea of its being taken in earnest.

[1] The full text of this document will be found in M. Plon's *Cellini*.

Alinari Photo.

POPE PAUL III.

By Titian, in the Museo Nationale, Naples.

CHAPTER V.

FLORENCE AND ROME.

ALEXANDER FARNESE, like Clement VII., Leo X., and Julius II., had that love of art and of elegant literature which was characteristic of the period, and he may be called the last of the Renaissance Popes. He was liberal, he loved ease and magnificence, and he was just the sort of Pope from whom artists like Cellini might expect ample patronage.

Of Paul III. Ranke says[1]: "Seldom has a Pope been so beloved in Rome as he was," and elsewhere[2] he calls him "a man full of talent, intelligence, and penetrating sagacity". No moral scandal tarnished his fame, as a Pope; but he is said to have been somewhat wild in his youth, and, if Ranke is to be believed, he acknowledged a son and a daughter, born long before he was elected to the Papacy at the age of sixty-six.

Cellini states that the Pope's son, Pier Luigi, had a favourite—whether a servant or a friend he does not tell us—who married a daughter of the murdered Pompeo, and that this daughter, in order to revenge her father's death, persuaded her husband to persuade Pier Luigi to persuade the Pope to bring about the ruin, if not the death, of Cellini. This many-jointed plot, if it ever existed, must have been very likely to

[1] Vol. i., p. 245. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 276.

lose force in the course of its transmission from one of its agents to another; and how far Cellini could have known about it with any certainty is extremely doubtful.

He maintains that Pompeo's daughter and her husband were guilty of the atrocious action of hiring assassins to murder him; but it must be remembered that in those wild times, to avenge a parent's death was commonly considered an act of filial piety, and that the method of the accomplishment of that duty was not too keenly scrutinised. Cellini writes in horror of the wickedness of Pompeo's daughter in attempting to get him assassinated as a punishment for murdering her father; but he seems to have thought nothing of having assassinated with his own hand the constable who, in the execution of his duty and in self-defence, had killed his brother.

Cellini represents Pier Luigi as doing all he could to injure him with the Pope. He not the less acknowledges that when, some time later, he visited Piacenza, and Pier Luigi, then Duke of Castro, was in power there, this supposed mortal enemy, instead of seizing the opportunity to destroy him, welcomed him "with unbounded marks of esteem and affection," and sent afterwards for his refreshment at his inn, "abundance to eat and to drink of very excellent quality".

Cellini also tells us that when, during his imprisonment, of which we shall hear more presently, he was condemned to death, Pier Luigi's wife[1] went to the Pope and threw herself upon her kness before him in the presence of several cardinals, and pleaded Cellini's

[1] She was a daughter of Luigi Orsini, Count of Pitigliano.

cause with such warmth and effect as to obtain a commutation of the sentence.

As to Pier Luigi[1] himself, his reputation was of the worst, and Varchi represents him as an unnatural monster, who contrived in a diabolical manner to combine sacrilege with the most horrible of immoralities.

On being presented to the new Pope, Cellini begged to have the office of Stamper to the Mint restored to him. Paul III. replied that Cellini must first obtain pardon for his homicide on the Feast of the Assumption, after public penance, when the Capirioni, or warders of the city of Rome, were accustomed to obtain freedom for twelve outlaws.

Having been privately warned that his victim's daughter was determined to get him punished either by the law or by a breach of it, Cellini thought it prudent to retire to Florence until the Feast of the Assumption should come round.

On his way thither he stayed one night at a small inn, at which the host annoyed Cellini by insisting upon being paid his bill before he went to bed. In revenge, before he left his room the next morning, Cellini with a sharp knife cut the bedding of four beds to ribbons. He had the gratification of knowing that he "had done a damage of more than fifty crowns". But he considered that he had let his host off very lightly; for during the night he at one time determined to burn the house down, and at another to "cut the throats of four fine horses belonging to the innkeeper, in the stable".

[1] When Duke of Parma, Luigi was murdered by his own courtiers in 1547, and, as some suppose, with at least the connivance of Charles V.

Much had happened in his native city since Cellini had last visited it. The Florentine republic had breathed its last in the year 1532 and, after the capitulation of the city mentioned in a former chapter, the Florentines had unwillingly elected Alessandro de' Medici, then only about twenty years of age, as the head of their state.

Alessandro began his reign with a meretricious display of generosity and justice, which dazzled while it deceived his subjects and gave him a momentary popularity ; but he had neither a sense of right and wrong, nor a desire to do his duty. Although personally brave, and kind to the young, he was licentious and self-indulgent ; he did not hesitate to outrage the most noble families or to scale the walls of convents in the gratification of his passions ; he violated women, he tortured men ; and he was said to have been guilty of the murder of his own mother.[1] He was also reputed to have been responsible for the murder of his cousin, Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici.[2]

Alessandro received Cellini "with extraordinary kindness, and pressed him to remain in his service, giving him orders at once to strike dies for his coinage, and presenting him with the finest and best arquebuse he ever saw or ever had".

At that time Ottaviano de' Medici, a distant relation of Alessandro's "to all appearance had got the government of everything in his own hands," and he and Cellini were soon quarrelling. Cellini asked him why another artist was allowed to mix

[1] Napier's *Flor. Hist.*, vol. v., pp. 2, 8, 37, 38, 47 and 48. Also Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo the Magnificent*, pp. 366, 367.

[2] Symonds's *Cellini*, p. 82, footnote.

ALESSANDRO DE' MEDICI.

From a Picture in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

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Alessandro began his reign with a meretricious display of generosity and public spirit, lauded while it concealed his extreme and gross vices, unnecessary popularity, and he had neither a sense of right and wrong, nor a shame to do the one or the other. A personally brave, and even at the proper time and occasion, a chivalrous man, he did not hesitate to outrage the most noble females or to stain the walls of convents in the gratification of his passions; he violated women, he tortured men; and he was said to have been guilty of the murder of his own mother.[1] He was also reputed to have been responsible for the murder of his cousin, Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici.[2]

Alessandro received Cellini with extraordinary kindness, and promised him an income in the service, giving him orders at once to make him a set of buttons, and presenting him with the house and vineyard he had just left in Rome.

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[1] Napier's *Flor. Hist.*, vol. v. pp. 4, 5, 37, 38, 47 and 48. Also Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo the Magnificent*, pp. 366, 367.

[2] Symonds's *Cellini*, p. lii. Appendix.

Alinari Photo.

ALESSANDRO DE' MEDICI.
By Bronzino, in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

"his stupid dies" with his own, whereon Ottaviano "like the donkey that he was," replied: "Because we choose to have it so".

"I do not choose to have it so," responded Cellini.

"And if the duke will have it so?" went on Ottaviano.

"So will I not have it," said Cellini.

"Well, you will have to swallow it, even if you burst," exclaimed Ottaviano.

The dispute, however, proceeded no further; for that very day Cellini received "a full safe-conduct from the Pope," with advice to go to Rome at once and obtain "the pardon of Our Lady's feast in mid-August"; and he went at once to bid farewell to Duke Alessandro, whom he found in bed "suffering the consequence of a debauch".

He showed the duke the wax model for his medal, of which the portrait was finished but the reverse untouched. Beside Alessandro was standing a dark-complexioned and small, but active and well-proportioned man, eyeing him "with very evil glances". This was his distant relative, Lorenzino de' Medici. His aspect was usually grave, and when he smiled it was as if by an effort.

"Messer Lorenzino," said Cellini to Alessandro, "will give me some exquisite subject for the reverse, as he is a very learned person endowed with the highest genius."

"Lorenzino, you shall give him the reverse," said the duke.

"I will do so as quickly as I can," replied Lorenzino, "and I hope to do something which will make the whole world wonder."

Alessandro, "who held him sometimes for a fool and sometimes for a coward, turned about in bed, and laughed at his bragging words". Five months later Lorenzino carried out his intention of making the whole world wonder, by stabbing Alessandro to death.

In his written apologia he stated that Alessandro was an execrable tyrant, whose enormities exceeded those of Nero. After spending eleven years in exile, Lorenzino was himself assassinated.[1]

Cellini, when he had taken leave of Duke Alessandro, went to Rome, and in company with some other outlaws obtained pardon for his homicide, on the Feast of the Assumption. In order to obtain it he ought by the rules to have given himself up on the previous day and spent the night in prison, but at his earnest request the Pope dispensed him from that indignity.

Soon afterwards Cellini fell ill with a violent fever, during which he was visited by his two friends, Franzesi the poet, and Giovanni Gaddi, a brother of Angelo Gaddi, and, like that brother, an artist; but Giovanni was much more celebrated as a patron of artists than as an artist in person.

Cellini rather severely, and probably unjustly, calls him "a great connoisseur of the arts, although he had no acquaintance with any"; but Vasari seems to imply that he was a practical artist; for in writing of the Gaddi family he says[2]: "Gaddo, Taddeo,

[1] See Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo the Magnificent*, p. 366. Lorenzino de' Medici was the author of the comedy "Aridosio," which is still considered one of the ornaments of the Italian language.

[2] Vol. i., p. 229. W. M. Rossetti, in the *Ency. Brit.*, writes of him as having been "a painter of promise".

Agnolo, and Giovanni, have adorned many venerated churches by their talents and the exercise of their arts".

When Giovanni Gaddi was visiting the invalided and feverish Cellini, he greatly annoyed him by handling his various belongings and admiring them as if he contemplated purchasing them in the case of Cellini's death, saying: "That is a fine thing! That is yet finer!" Worse still, Franzesi the poet, perceiving Cellini's vexation and irritability, observed that recollections of Dante's *Inferno* were evidently disturbing his mind.

"Drive that miserable Mattio Franzesi from my side!" exclaimed Cellini to Giovanni Gaddi; and, when this had been done, he turned in a rage upon Gaddi himself, and, "cast bad words at him; to wit, that he came to rob him, and not from any motive of charity, and insults of that kind;" thus ridding himself of painter as well as of poet.

When he was sufficiently recovered, Cellini thought he would try the effect of his native air, and returned to Florence, where he stayed with his sister. Since his last visit to that city, some ill-disposed person—Cellini says it was Vasari, at the instigation of Ottaviano de' Medici—had told Duke Alessandro that Cellini had been abusing him and had bragged that, when the duke's enemies attacked Florence, he would be the first to leap upon its walls. When, therefore, Alessandro heard that Cellini had returned to Florence, he said: "Benvenuto would have done much better to die, because he is come to put his head into a noose, and I will never pardon him".

All this was repeated to Cellini, and, as soon as he

was well enough, he forced his way boldly into the palace and cleared his character before the duke, who said nothing more severe than : " Take heed to be an honest man ; and try to regain your health ".

But Cellini never forgave Vasari. He declares that he had most hospitably received Georgio Vasari as a guest in Rome, where he committed a great offence. Cellini, being short of room, made him share a bed with one of his workmen. In the course of the night, something tickled Vasari and, when intending to scratch himself, he accidentally scratched his bedfellow ! For this the bedfellow " was resolutely bent on killing him " ; but Cellini " made the quarrel up, and afterwards got Georgio [Vasari] into Cardinal de' Medici's household, and continually helped him ". Yet, says Cellini, the ungrateful fellow[1] told tales, and untrue tales, about him, to the duke.

Whether he was right or wrong in his suspicions, they were not altogether unnatural ; for Cellini knew that Ottaviano de' Medici hated him, and, even by his own account, Vasari was an intimate friend of Ottaviano. " The Magnificent Ottaviano de' Medici," says Vasari,[2] " took me into his protection in such sort, that ever after, during his life, I was held by him in the place of a son."

Respecting the Roman story Vasari's account varies greatly from Cellini's. So far from Cellini's having taking Vasari in as a needy stranger, and

[1] Everybody was not of Cellini's opinion. " Who would not become the friend of Vasari," said the Padre Della Valle, " if it were only for the sentiments of gratitude which he so manifestly entertained for all who had offered him kindness ? "

[2] Vol. v., p. 506.

having subsequently used his influence to get him into the service of the Cardinal de' Medici, Vasari states that the cardinal passed through Arezzo, where Vasari had just finished some frescoes in a convent, and took him to Rome "in his service, where by the courtesy and favour of that noble" he was enabled to devote himself for many months to the study of design.

No two contemporary artists ever wrote more world-renowned, and at the same time entertaining, volumes than Vasari's *Lives of the Painters* and Cellini's *Autobiography*. Vasari's book is immeasurably superior to his works of art, and some authorities consider that Cellini's pen surpassed his chisel[1]; although this is a question upon which opinions doubtless differ. The two men cannot be said to have been literary rivals; but it is certain that they disliked if they did not actually hate each other.

Cellini went back to Rome, where he worked on Duke Alessandro's medal, and he sent to Florence to beg that Lorenzino de' Medici would let him have "the reverse of the medal" as soon as possible. Lorenzino "replied that he was thinking night and day of nothing else, and that he would finish it as soon as he was able".

Presently news came of the murder of Duke Alessandro by Lorenzino.

"This is the reverse of that vile tyrant's medal which your Lorenzino de' Medici promised you," said a foe[2] of the Medician family, who had been banished from Florence, to Cellini.

[1] See Garnett's *Italian Literature*, p. 177.

[2] Francesco Soderini.

Another enemy of the Medici[1] then said: "We dislike your dukes, and won't have any more of them; although you have been trying to immortalise them with your medals!"

"You blockheads!" retorted Cellini. "I am only a poor goldsmith who works for whoever pays me. But I will make this one answer to your silly railleries; that before two or three days, at the longest, have passed by, you will have another duke, much worse, perhaps, than the duke you have just got rid off."

The next day the man who had declared he would have no more dukes went to Cellini's shop and said to him:—

"There is no need to spend money in couriers, for you know things before they happen".

Then he informed Cellini that Cosimo,[2] the son of Giovanni de' Medici, had been elected duke.

In the year[3] of Alessandro's murder an important event took place that was unnoticed by Cellini. The ex-soldier, Ignatius of Loyola, and a few like-minded friends had determined to serve their God under a discipline as strict as that of soldiers, and they came to Rome in order to obtain the approval of the Pope. Paul III. received them very graciously. Their scheme was then in too elementary a stage to receive definite Papal confirmation; but the Pope appointed two of their number to teach theology in Rome; and,

[1] Baccio Bettini, an intimate friend of Cellini's and a considerable patron of the fine arts.

[2] Cosimo was only a distant relation of Alessandro's, being his fifth cousin. He was much more nearly connected with Lorenzino, Alessandro's murderer, to whom he was a second cousin.

[3] 1537.

three years later he established their institute under the name of the Society of Jesus.[1]

Although Cellini more than once hints that the morality of the priests in Rome was not what it might have been, he does not tell us how much the Society of Jesus did to reform it. But, if the advent of St. Ignatius and his associates to Rome, shortly after the murder of Duke Alessandro, was to have such far-reaching consequences for good among the Italian priests, that of a solitary layman, three years earlier, was also destined to have an enormous influence, both upon the clergy and upon the laity of Rome. Yet, as in the case of St. Ignatius, so in that of St. Philip Neri, Cellini is silent.

St. Philip Neri, first as a layman and afterwards as a priest, endeavoured to reform the Romans with gentleness and cheerfulness. "He was gay, genial, and irresistibly winning, neither insult nor wrong could dim the brightness of his joy."[2]

"St. Philip," says Cardinal Newman,[3] whose following description of the times of the Renaissance is worth quotation, "lived in an age, as traitorous to the interests of Catholicism as any that preceded it, or can follow it. He lived at a time when pride mounted high and the senses held rule; a time when kings and nobles never had more of state and homage, and never less of personal responsibility and peril; when medieval winter was receding, and the summer sun of civilisation was bringing into leaf and flower a thousand forms of luxurious enjoyment; when a new world of thought and beauty had opened upon the human mind, in the

[1] Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, vol. vii., 472, 473.
[2] F. S. Bowden's *Miniature Lives*, i., 293.
[3] *Idea of a University*, p. 234 *et seq.*

discovery of the treasures of classic literature and art, dazzled by the enchantress, and drinking in the magic of her song; he saw the high and the wise, the student and the artist, painting, and poetry, and sculpture, and music, and architecture, drawn within her range, and circling round the abyss: he saw heathen forms mounting thence, and forming in the thick air—all this he saw, and he perceived that the mischief was to be met, not with argument, not with science, not with protests and warnings, not by the recluse or the preacher, but by means of the great counter-fascination of purity and truth." Unlike other reformers, "he preferred to yield to the stream, and direct the current, which he could not stop, of science, literature, art, and fashion, and to sweeten and to sanctify what God made very good, and man had spoilt".

Popes and cardinals might send for Cellini, whilst they were eating their dinners, to give him orders for gold or silver plate, or they might visit his workshop to watch the progress of the orders they had given him; but how little were they influenced by such a man! and what did he know of their hearts and their lives, in comparison with the humble, empty-handed Father Philip, who never sought the friendship of the great, yet was taken into the most intimate friendship of popes, cardinals, bishops, princes and nobles, at the same time that he was of all men of Rome the most popular among the poor?

Cellini was an artist. St. Philip was the friend of artists! Great painters were among his penitents, he was devoted to music, and he ministered to Palestrina in his last moments. In studying Cellini's view of Italy, let us not forget St. Philip's.

CHAPTER VI.

IN PRISON.

PAUL III. began by attempting to observe a complete neutrality between the French and the Imperial factions; he had reasons for mistrusting both; but, as time went on, he found impartiality impossible; for indifference to the claims of either of them threatened to entail the enmity of both; and we find him adopting the worst of compromises between impartiality and prejudice—that of siding first with one party and then with the other.

First he sought an alliance with Charles V., and when the emperor went to Rome, after his expedition to Tunis, the Pope received him with extraordinary magnificence. A little time beforehand he had ordered Cellini to make for his imperial guest a golden crucifix; and everything had been arranged for its production, when the poet Latino Juvenale, who, says Cellini, "had a pretty big dash of the fool in his composition," came to the goldsmith's house and said: "It is our part to invent, and yours to execute. Before I left the Pope last night we thought of something far superior to a crucifix."

"Neither you nor the Pope can think of anything better than a subject in which Christ bears a part;" answered Cellini; "so you may go on talking your courtier's nonsense till it is finished."

The poet went away in a rage, without saying

another word, and he determined to take vengeance on Cellini for his impertinence, a determination which, as we shall presently see, he did not fail to carry out. His suggestion, however, was enforced by the Pope, who placed in Cellini's hands an illuminated Hour-book, which had cost 2000 crowns, together with jewels valued at 6000 crowns, and ordered him to prepare a golden cover for the book, inlaid with jewels, instead of making the crucifix.

On the arrival of the emperor, Cellini was ordered to present the book to him, and when he had done so, the emperor "continued talking a whole half-hour, touching on divers topics artistic and agreeable".

Charles V. then ordered 500 crowns to be given—Cellini says, to himself. Unfortunately, another official of the Pope's, afterwards a bishop and a cardinal,[1] had presented the emperor with two of "the most beautiful Turkish horses that ever came into Christendom," just before Cellini had presented the book. When the emperor's servant, who had been ordered to fetch the 500 crowns, brought them and inquired for the personage for whom the emperor intended them, the giver of the horses stepped forward and took them, to the exclusion of the giver of the book. Cellini complained of this to the Pope, who promised him his "share," which seems to show that, unlike Cellini, the Pope did not consider that the emperor had intended the whole 500 for the goldsmith.

Cellini states that Latino Juvenale took an opportunity of saying to the Pope: "Benvenuto is a

[1] Durante Duranti.

person of very remarkable genius; but he ought to consider what language it is right to use when speaking of a Pope. He has had the audacity to say that Pope Clement was the handsomest and most gifted sovereign who ever reigned; but that luck was always against him; whereas there is nothing good in your Holiness except your luck; that the tiara seems to weep for rage upon your head, and that you look like a truss of straw dressed up in a man's clothes."

These words, "reported by a man who knew most excellently well how to say them," gained credence with the Pope, who had, however, too much tact to betray his annoyance; and he turned it off with a laugh. Ever afterwards, however, Cellini was out of favour with Paul III. He found it difficult to obtain an audience; when he got one he was coldly received, and, if he asked anything of the Pope, his holiness replied abruptly that he should do as he thought fit.

For the splendid book cover which he had made as a present for the Emperor, and for some other work done for the Pope, Cellini complains that he was very badly paid. Altogether things appeared to be going against him in Rome, and he made up his mind to leave it, without the Pope's permission, and to pay a visit to France; partly, says he, "because I saw that the Pope did not hold me in the same esteem as formerly, my faithful service having been besmirched by lying tongues; and also because I feared lest those who had the power might play me some worse trick".

His slipping off without leave seems to have raised the suspicions of the Roman authorities, as we shall very soon see.

After going to Venice to make a[1] medal-portrait of that great man of letters, Bembo, who was afterwards a cardinal, Cellini went to Paris, where he went to visit the painter Rosso, whom he believed to be his friend. Rosso received him coldly, told him that he had done a foolish thing in expecting to find employment in Paris, and, according to Cellini's story, did all in his power to prevent his obtaining an audience from the king.

As usual, in the case of those with whom Cellini quarrelled, he lays stress upon the man's base ingratitude; for he declares that when Rosso was in Rome he had treated him with great kindness. But in an earlier part of his autobiography Cellini himself owned that Rosso had been "very glad to see" him, had "embraced and kissed" him, and had received him very hospitably when he went into the country on his long-haired pony to recruit his strength after his attack of the plague; so it is very doubtful whether Rosso lay under any obligation to Cellini.

At the date of Cellini's arrival in France the king was travelling in the country. Cellini followed the court, and received a very gracious audience from his majesty. He also made the acquaintance of a very powerful patron at the court of Francis I. in Ippolito d' Este (brother to the Duke of Ferrara), at that time Archbishop of Milan and afterwards a cardinal. Then Cellini had the ill-luck to take a

[1] Cardinal Bembo was a sort of monarch among the literary men of his day. His *History of Venice* is his best known work. His literary style was excellent, and he was an admirable imitator of that of others; but he had little or no originality.

fever, and, when he had sufficiently recovered to travel, he left a country where he could see no prospect of immediate employment, and returned to Rome. There he received orders to supply jewellery for the Duchess of Bracciano, whose husband afterwards murdered her. This and other orders made him so busy that he employed eight men, and worked with them all day and much of the night. But no orders appear to have been sent to him at this time from the Vatican.

Then came a letter from Archbishop Ippolite d' Este, saying that Francis I. desired Cellini to return to France and to enter his service. Cellini replied that he would "set off upon the spot".

But this was not so easy! Cellini had lately quarrelled with one of his workmen, who had tried to run away, owing his master money, and Cellini had sued him and got him imprisoned. In revenge, according to Cellini's account, the man had informed the authorities that his late master had stolen a number of the papal jewels when he had been ordered to take them out of their settings by Clement VII. during the siege of Rome. On this charge Cellini was arrested and imprisoned in the Castle of St. Angelo.[1]

Of course Cellini indignantly denies this charge. He even states that when the list of the papal jewels was examined, not one of them was found to be missing, and that, when he was tried, he made a splendid defence, although his judges did not acquit him. Perfectly innocent he may have been; yet, on his own confession, he had stolen some of the gold

[1] This took place in 1537.

when he had taken the same jewels from their fittings; and it is curious that, some time afterwards, when he left the court of France to return to Italy, he should have been accused of taking with him plate belonging to the king. In each case he may have been guiltless; but the coincidence is singular.

The Constable of the fortress of St. Angelo was a Florentine and "a worthy man," who showed Cellini the greatest courtesy and allowed him to go where he would in the castle and let him have anything he desired for the purpose of his goldsmith's work. Unfortunately this excellent Constable was subject to periodical fits of temporary insanity; at "one time he thought he was an oil-jar, at another time a frog". Suddenly, during Cellini's incarceration, "he imagined that he was a bat, and when he went abroad to take the air he used to scream like bats in a high, thin tone; and then he would flap his hands and body as though he were about to fly".

Worse still, he fancied that Cellini also was a bat; and that, being a bat, he would try to fly away; therefore, instead of giving Cellini extraordinary liberty as heretofore, the Constable gave orders that he should be securely locked up.

In those times it was the custom either to treat a lunatic like a brute-beast, or to punish him like a criminal, or to leave him completely free, however dangerous, to do what he pleased; but it is extraordinary that, even as long ago as the first half of the sixteenth century, a man occasionally deranged should have been allowed to hold so responsible a post as that of custodian of the principal prison and fortress of Rome.

So long as Cellini had been on parole, no thought of flight crossed his mind; but now that he was in close confinement he concentrated his thoughts on a method of escape.

He stole—the word is his own—a "big and heavy" pair of pincers from one of the Swiss Guard, who used to amuse himself by carpentering, and he hid it in his straw mattress. In the nights he drew the nails which fastened the hinges to his door and then filled up the holes with sham nail-heads made of modelling-wax mixed with rust. He also cut his sheets into long strips. After several nights of preparatory labour he loosened the hinges of the door and escaped from his cell about two hours before daybreak.

A series of adventures followed. First he had to climb the walls, and then to fasten the end of his long cord, made of strips of sheeting, to a projection. With this he descended from a "vast height". But he was not yet free; for the Constable had had two more walls built beyond. In this predicament Cellini found a pole which he laid against the first of these walls and swarmed up it, and he tied a length of some reserved strips of sheeting to the top of this pole and thus let himself down on the other side. Then he met a sentinel, whom he frightened off with his poignard; and, somehow or other, he scrambled over the last wall, getting such a fall in doing so that he broke a leg, got a wound on the head, and lay stunned "for more than an hour and a half, so far as he could judge". Some mastiffs then attacked him and bit him badly, until he wounded one of them with his dagger, when it ran away, with its companions after it.

In his miserable plight Cellini crawled on all fours towards a palace where he could count on shelter, and one much frequented by Florentines, that of the widow of Duke Alessandro, who had now married Duke Ottaviano Farnese. On his way thither, however, he was recognised by one of the servants of Cardinal Cornaro, who carried him to his master's palace. The cardinal befriended him and went to the Pope to plead his cause. When Paul III. had heard the account of his escape, he said: "His exploit was very clever; yet when I was a young man I also escaped from the fortress at that very spot!"

This was true, and it had happened when he was imprisoned in the Castle of St. Angelo for some youthful escapade,[1] at the wish of, or at least with the consent of, his mother. But Cellini objects that, whereas he had escaped with the greatest difficulty and danger by means of strips of sheeting, Paul III. had been let down comfortably in a basket by a guard whom he had bribed. Now it so happened that Cardinal Cornaro had asked the Pope for a bishopric for one of his friends; and, when he began to plead the cause of Cellini, the Pope interrupted him by saying: "You want the bishopric; I want Benvenuto. Let me have Benvenuto and I will put him in those rooms which open on to my private garden, and his friends can come and see him there."

It may well be asked how Cellini could possibly have heard of such a conversation and so private a

[1] See Ranke, i., p. 181. But Cellini says that he was imprisoned on a charge of having forged a brief, and states that Alexander VI. had "resolved on cutting off his head".

transaction. It sounds a most improbable story, and Cellini was the last man likely to have heard the truth about it. According to Cellini, the cardinal agreed to the proposal, and packed him off to the Pope, telling him pleasantly to keep up his spirits.

Throughout the history of his imprisonment Cellini makes grave charges, which he does nothing to substantiate, of treachery, lying, and intended murder, against Pope, cardinals, bishops, and others. The account offered in these pages is gathered from the incidents described, without adopting the inferences of evil motives suggested by Cellini. Those who wish to adopt them had better read Cellini's narrative for themselves.

At first Cellini was very well treated in his second imprisonment ; but fresh charges appear to have been made against him. New evidence respecting his murder of Pompeo was submitted to the Pope, as well as a charge of an attempt to murder a cardinal, which Cellini utterly denies. It must be remembered, however, that Cellini had by his own showing murdered two men, had very nearly murdered a third, and was now lying a prisoner on a charge of stealing papal jewels, theft being then a capital crime. We cannot therefore be much surprised at hearing from Cellini himself that he was transferred to one of the worst criminal prisons in Rome and that his execution was contemplated.

Cellini was eventually restored to the care of the Constable of the Castle of St. Angelo, who had not recovered from his temporary mania. So alarmed had the Constable been at Cellini's escape that he now had him imprisoned in a deep dungeon, and

locked in by four doors, to prevent "the bat" from flying away a second time.

During his incarceration Cellini professes that religion was his only comfort. He read the Bible "from the commencement". We hear much in this country of the poor papists not being allowed the Bible in their own language; but, even before the birth of Cellini, there had been eight editions of the Bible in Italian.[1] It is a pity that Cellini did not profit more by his studies of Scriptures; for, in their midst, he tried to commit suicide. Yet he declares that he saw visions, and that future events were revealed to him, adding: "ever since . . . an aureole of glory [marvellous to relate] has rested on my head. This is visible to every sort of men to whom I have chosen to point it out; but those have been very few."

In his[2] *Renaissauce in Italy* the late J. A. Symonds calls Cellini "a devout Catholic," whose "religion had but little effect upon his life"; and he states that in those days "the separation between religion and morality was complete in Italy".[3]

Neither Cellini nor any one else whose religion had little effect on his life could be a devout Catholic! There is nothing devout in sinning against God and man. Cellini may have had faith. Very possibly, like the devils, he believed and trembled. Indeed he may have held the theory sarcastically propounded by Dryden:—

> A lively faith will bear aloft the mind,
> And leave the luggage of good works behind.

[1] *Clifton Tracts.* [2] III., p. 470.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 451.

BENVENVTVS CELLINI
FLORENTINVS
SCVLPTOR·ET·AVRIFABER
Hieronymus Rossi Sculp Romæ

"It being considered," says Newman,[1] "that a vast number of sacred truths are taken for granted as *facts* by a Catholic nation in the same sense as the sun in the heavens is a fact, you will see how many things take place of necessity, which to Protestants seem shocking, and which could not be avoided unless it had been promised that the Church should consist of none but the predestinate; nay, unless it consisted of none but the educated and refined."

A bad Catholic who has become irreligious in his conduct may have lost his charity and his contrition without having lost either his faith or his hope. Such a man, as Newman puts it, will turn "the truth to his own purpose, his bad purpose". Thus in the days of chivalry "tournaments were held in defiance of the excommunication of the Church, yet with a show of devotion. We know the dissolute character of the medieval knights and of the troubadours; yet that dissoluteness which would lead Protestant poets and travellers to scoff at religion led them not to deny revealed truth, but to combine it with their own wild and extravagant profession. The knight swore before Almighty God, His Blessed Mother and—the ladies. . . . The crusaders had faith sufficient to bind them to a perilous pilgrimage and warfare; they kept the Friday's abstinence, and planted the tents of their mistresses within the shadow of the pavilion of the glorious St. Louis."

As a modern example of the same sort of people and conditions, Newman imagines an "old woman, who first genuflects before the Blessed Sacrament and

[1] See his *Difficulties of Anglicans.*, vol. i., lecture ix.

then steals her neighbour's handkerchief or prayer-book . . . she kneels because she believes, she steals because she does not love ; she may be out of God's grace, she is not altogether out of His sight". "But," asks Newman, "does England bear no thieves?"

When men like Cellini acted wickedly, and yet retained their faith, the action came, not from their religion, but from the bad use they made of their free will. A realisation of this truth is necessary for the formation of a fair judgment in studying the character and the times of such men as Cellini.

When we contrast his verses written in prison as to what he would do if liberated :—

> *Credo* I'd sing, *Salve Reginas* pour
> And *Paternosters ;* alms I'd then bestow
> Morn after morn on blind folk, lame, and poor,

with his subsequent conduct, the more modern lines

> When the devil was ill, the devil a monk would be ;
> When the devil got well, the devil a monk was he,

inevitably suggest themselves.

Cellini gives us long descriptions of his sufferings, which were chiefly owing to the insanity of the Constable in his mad fear lest "the bat" should fly away once more. The Constable's illness increased, until he died ; but, shortly before his death, his brain cleared and he became in his right mind again. Then he put Cellini into a comfortable prison and showed him kindness as at first. With the restoration of the senses, however, came death to the Constable.

Cellini states that the already mentioned Durante, Prefect of the Camera, bribed a warder to poison him

by putting powdered diamond into his food. He says further that the goldsmith who had been ordered to pound up a diamond, given him for this purpose, kept the diamond and used a beryl, which he erroneously fancied would serve the same end. Here again we may say that Cellini was the last man likely to learn the truth, if any, of the story.

An impartial reader will find it very difficult to form an opinion of the conduct of either Paul III. or his son, Pier Luigi, respecting the imprisonment of Cellini, from the *ex parte* statements of the prisoner himself. It may be best to leave these questions not only undecided but unargued, merely remarking that Pier Luigi was a scoundrel and had some influence with his father, and then passing on to say that the Pope set Benvenuto Cellini free, at the request of Ippolito d' Este, then the Cardinal of Ferrara, acting on behalf of Francis I., who desired to have the services of so fine an artist in France.

Paul III. was then inclining towards an alliance with France, and was prepared to do much to please Francis I. ; but it is probable that he was also glad to find an excuse for getting rid of such a turbulent and doubtful character as Cellini, whom he did not like to hang, yet was afraid to set at liberty.

The Cardinal of Ferrara took Cellini to his own house, probably the villa, with its extensive gardens, which he then possessed upon the west side of the Quirinal hill.

By Cellini's own account he would never have escaped alive from the Castle of St. Angelo had it not been for the good offices of the Cardinal of Ferrara ; yet almost ever afterwards he made com-

plaints of this cardinal. First he objected to the long delays in his journey to France. The cardinal left Cellini for many months at his palace at Ferrara, "a very handsome place," where he provided Cellini with all things necessary for his work. Considering that the Cardinal had removed him from a prison to a palace, Cellini had little cause for grumbling. Nevertheless he was "sorely dissatisfied," and he amused himself by shooting the tame peacocks in the park with a gun loaded with noiseless powder.

On his way to Ferrara, Cellini had used his gun for another purpose. He had quarrelled with a postmaster, who accused him of over-riding one of his horses. Each disputant insulted the other. The postmaster pointed his pike at Cellini, while Cellini pointed his arquebuse at the postmaster. And then, says Cellini, his arquebuse "went off of itself" and killed the postmaster. All this happened on a Good Friday.

CHAPTER VII.

PARIS.

TOWARDS the end of the last chapter it was hinted that Cellini was too ready to find fault with the man who had saved his life. None the less is it fair to observe that Ippolito d' Este, Cardinal of Ferrara, while an admirable judge of art and literature, was much fonder of patronising men of art and letters than of paying them.

His treatment of Ariosto is sufficient proof of this. Having perceived his talents, he secured his services by making him a gentleman of his household; but when Ariosto dedicated to him his greatest work, the *Orlando Furioso*, all the thanks the cardinal gave him was to say:—

"Where have you been for all that rot?"[1]

When the Cardinal went to Hungary in 1518, he pressed Ariosto to accompany him. The poet refused, inquiring whether his Eminence imagined that by paying him so poor a pension as seventy crowns a year he had purchased a slave, and telling him that he was welcome to withdraw that boon. His Eminence forthwith took him at his word.

Perhaps this cardinal may be best known to modern travellers for the famous Villa d' Este, which he built at Tivoli. As to the beauty of the ilexes and cypresses

[1] Garnett's *Italian Literature*, p. 141.

which adorn its gardens there can be but one opinion; but its clipped hedges and stiff plantations, and the artificial waterfall known as the Girandola, have come in for a good deal of adverse criticism.

While at Ferrara, Cellini made a medal bearing a portrait of the cardinal's brother, the Duke of Ferrara —"unconquered Duke of Alphonso," as Ariosto calls him—who had just come to terms with the Pope about some matter of dispute respecting Modena, in which his Holiness had had somewhat the best of the bargain. On the reverse of the medal, accordingly, Cellini modelled a figure of Peace, and the duke ordered him to inscribe on it the words "Pretiosa in conspectu Domini," to typify that "his peace with the Pope had been dearly bought".

This duke was the husband of the famous—some would say infamous—Lucrezia Borgia, concerning whom opinions differ. Ariosto took a favourable view of her character, and wrote of her:—

> What of the fruitful stepchild shall I say
> Who in succession next to her I see,
> Lucrezia Borgia? who, from day to day,
> Shall wax in beauty, virtue, chastity.
> —Rose's translation of *Orlando Furioso*, canto xiii., 69.

At last the summons to go to the king in France arrived from the cardinal. Cellini found Francis I. at Fontainebleau; but he was just starting on a journey, with a train of 12,000 horse. To Cellini, who was ordered to follow the court, the inconvenience was intolerable, but he was somewhat comforted by the kind reception accorded to him by the king, who told the artist that he would find fully as much work as he could manage ready for him.

One evening the Cardinal of Ferrara sent for Cellini and said that the king wished to come to a clear understanding with him respecting the terms on which he should be employed.

"If his majesty gives you 300 crowns a year, you will be very well off; and for the rest, trust yourself in my hands," said the cardinal.

"If I had known that 300 crowns, or twice 300 crowns, were what I was to be offered, I would never have put a foot out of Italy," replied Cellini. "But I shall always feel grateful to you for saving my life, wherever I may be and how long soever I may live. The terms, however, I cannot accept; so I shall at once leave France. And now farewell. I will pray for you!"

"Go, then! It is impossible to help people against their will," said the cardinal.

A bystander observed: "The king will never find his equal. The cardinal is trying to cheapen him as if he were a load of wood." The speaker was Alamanni, an Italian poet, clever, cultured and cold in his writings; but warm-hearted and generous in his disposition.

As good as his word, Cellini mounted his horse to leave France for ever, and he started in the direction of the Holy Land and the Holy Sepulchre. When he had already ridden as far as two miles in that particular direction, a messenger from the king overtook him and ordered him to return at once into his majesty's presence.

"You have been sent by the cardinal, and for this reason I will not come," said Cellini.

"If gentle usage will not bring you back, those will

presently be here who will carry you, bound hand and foot," answered the king's messenger, adding: "When his majesty does send a man to prison, it is never for less than five years."

At this Cellini wheeled his horse round briskly and followed.

When they passed the king's lodgings, the Cardinal of Ferrara was standing at their door.

"Our most Christian monarch," said he to Cellini, "has of his own accord assigned you the same income as that which he gave to Leonardo da Vinci, namely, 700 crowns a year; he will pay you in addition for every piece of work that you may do for him, and you will be presented, at once, with 500 crowns to cover the cost of your journey to France."

"A noble offer from a noble king!" answered Cellini.[1]

Francis I. was a great and a liberal patron of art and literature. Cellini writes of his "consummate taste and his delight in everything rare and masterful". Moreover, as Bayle quaintly says of him:[2] "He had that frank and undisguised generosity which is so rarely found in persons of exalted station".

He was genial and good-humoured, with many good sides to his disposition. Although not exempt from charges of cowardice, he showed considerable valour on some occasions. When taken prisoner he made the famous speech: "All is lost but honour". Yet, when he had been set free, he regained all, but lost honour, by breaking his faith. He was called the Father of Letters; an apter title for him would have been the Fool of Women. In

[1] Cellini entered the service of Francis I. in 1540.

[2] *Gen. Dic., Historical and Critical*, vol. v., p. 324.

FRANCIS I. OF FRANCE.
Engraved by Massard, after the Picture by Titian.

his *Histoire de France* Mezerai says[1] of his court: "Infamy then grew into credit, prostitution was the path to favour, and by this means men got to be favourites, and continued such. In a word, posts and employments were bestowed merely at the caprice of women."

Francis I. had married Leonora, the sister of his late rival, Charles V. But marriage appears to have been an ordinance little respected by this French king.

Francis gave Cellini one of his castles[2] for a residence and a workshop, but, although he went thither escorted by an official of high rank, he did not enter it without a violent resistance from its former occupier, the Provost of Paris.

Cellini had not to wait long for work. The king ordered him to make twelve candelabra for his table, in the form of silver statues representing an equal number of gods aud goddesses; and each candlestick was to be the exact height of his majesty. While at work upon Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, Vulcan, and Mars, Cellini found time to finish a little vase and oval basin ordered some months earlier by the cardinal, who took them to the king and made him a present of them. "In return," the king "bestowed upon the cardinal an abbey worth 7000 crowns a year." Cellini implies that this abbey was given simply as a return for the small vase and basin, but no sensible reader can be expected to draw such a monstrous inference. So rich a gift must have been presented for other, and far more valuable services.

[1] Tom. iii., p. 446.

[2] Le Petit Nesle, on the site now occupied by the Palace of the Institute.

The king then expressed his intention of rewarding Cellini for the vase and basin.

This the cardinal begged him not to do, saying :—

"Sire, I beg you leave that to me; I will allow him a pension of at least 300 crowns when I have taken possession of the abbey".

As to his fulfilment of this promise Cellini remarks : "He never gave me anything, and it would be tedious to relate all the knavish tricks of this prelate".

From the king, however, Cellini received much kindness. One day Francis sent word to Cellini that he was going to vespers at the Sainte Chapelle and that Cellini "was to be at vespers too".[1] After the service, the king showed Cellini a beautiful drinking bowl of filagree work, and, when he admired it, asked him very pleasantly if he knew how it was made. Cellini writes :—

"Sacred majesty," quoth I, "I can tell you exactly how it is done, even so much that you, being the man of rare ability that you are, shall know how just as well as the master himself that made it knew".

Then followed a long, intricate, and highly technical explanation, after hearing which the king said "that now, owing to my description, he really thought he could do it himself".

Cellini's large workshops in the castle, and a liberal allowance given him by the king for the payment of smiths to work under him, enabled him to get on rapidly with the candelabra.

One day all the men in the house were busily at

[1] *Treatises*, p. 12.

work, many hammers striking metal were making a deafening din, Cellini himself was battering away on a plate of silver which he was shaping into Jupiter's body, while one workman was knocking some of the same metal into the form of Jupiter's head, and another man was beating another piece to provide that deity with legs.

Just at that moment, a boy happened to make some blunder, whereupon Cellini gave him a kick from behind which "sent him spinning several yards" until he fell against a visitor who had just entered.

Cellini, on looking up, saw, to his horror, that the stranger, against whom he had kicked the boy, was the King of France, who was as much amused as Cellini was confounded. Behind his majesty stood a formidable array of royalties and courtiers—the King and Queen of Navarre, the Dauphin and Dauphiness (the celebrated Catherine de' Medici), the Cardinal of Lorraine, the Duchess d'Etampes, then the king's mistress, and others.

Francis at once began a conversation with Cellini, in which he recommended him to employ workmen for all hard and rough work, and to limit his own labours to modelling and fine chiselling, as otherwise, said the King, he would lose his health by severe labour. Cellini replied that, if he were to give up hard manual toil, he would become ill, and that, instead of gaining, his finer work would lose from his want of healthy exercise.

The next day the king sent for Cellini whilst he was at dinner. Readers of Cellini's autobiography cannot have failed to notice how often kings, popes, cardinals and other great men sent for Cellini to talk

to him about his work for them, when they were at their meals. On this occasion the Cardinal of Ferrara was dining with the king. After complimenting Cellini upon his skill, Francis told him that, having already a beautiful vase and bowl of his workmanship, he wished for a salt-cellar to match them.

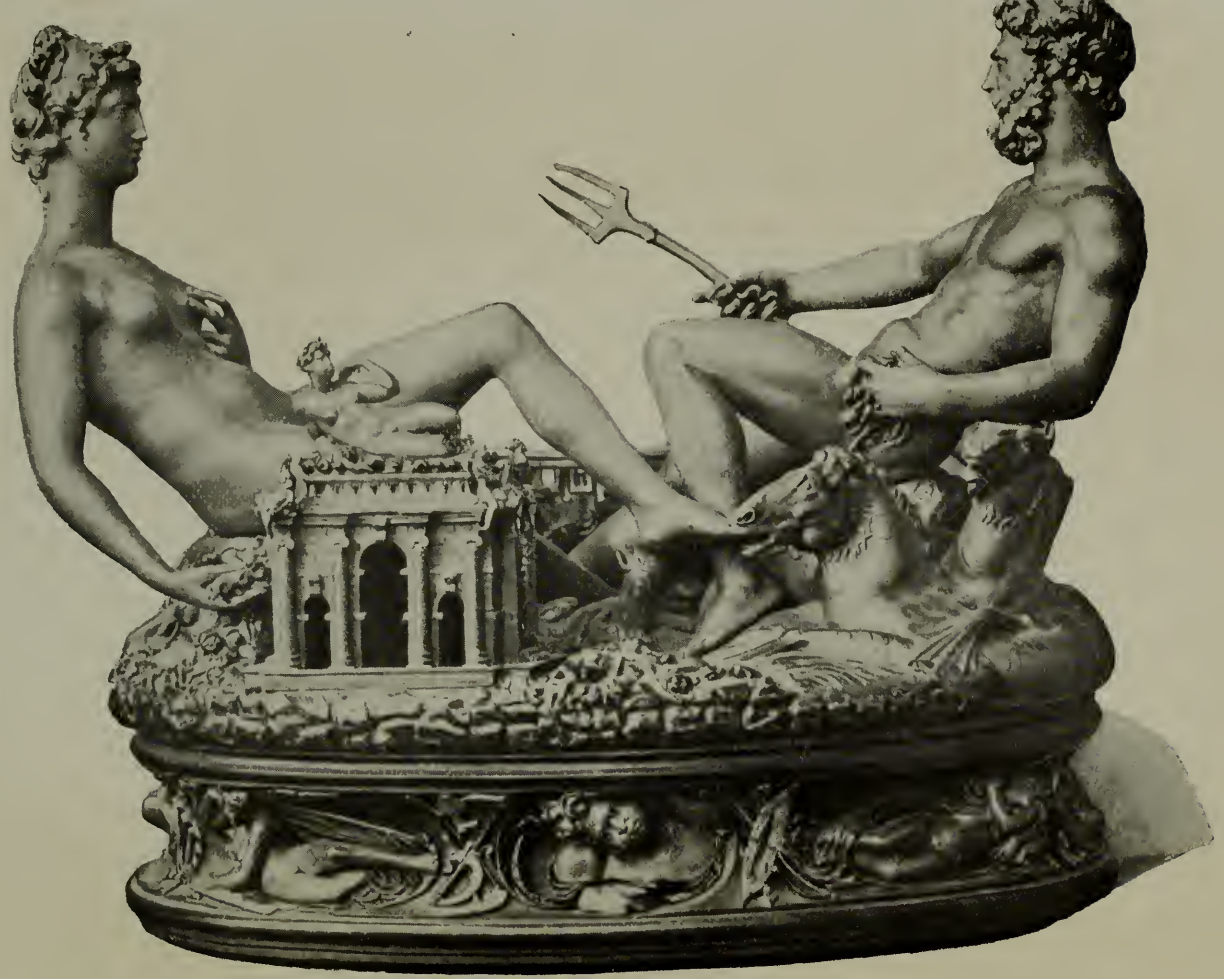
Now, before leaving Rome, the Cardinal of Ferrara had given orders to Cellini to make a salt-cellar, and he had then asked Alamanni, the poet, as well as a literary man named Cesano, to suggest designs, from which Cellini was to make his choice.

Their suggestions, says Cellini, were "good enough to describe in words, but not to execute in metal"; and he politely informed the cardinal that he preferred the children of his own brain to those sprung from the brains of others. At this the handsome Alamanni smiled, and, in his gentle voice, with his charming manner, said many witty things in Cellini's praise. The ugly Cesano, on the contrary, "spoke as he looked".

When Cellini had modelled his own design, Cesano persuaded the cardinal that it would take the lives of ten men to complete such an elaborate piece of work, whereat Cellini said in a temper :—

"Most reverend monsignor, and you gentlemen overflowing with learning, I hope to finish this work for one who is worthy of it". The cardinal was as angry as Cellini, and neither of them forgot the incident.

When, therefore, Francis I. told Cellini that he wanted a salt-cellar, he eagerly ran home and fetched the wax design which the cardinal had refused, and,



By permission of MM. Plon et Cie.

THE SALT-CELLAR OF FRANCIS I.
By Cellini, now at Vienna.

PLATE X.

as he placed it before the king, he looked towards the cardinal and said :—

"I told your eminence that I should execute this design for one who was worthy of it". Nettled at this remark the cardinal said to the king :—

"Sire, this is an enormous undertaking. I am only afraid that we shall never see it finished."

"Princes who put heart and courage into their servants render the greatest undertakings quite easy," retorted Cellini.

The king then took Cellini into a private room and arranged for the carrying out of the design. On his way home, carrying 1000 golden crowns which the king had given him for material with which to make the salt-cellar, Cellini was attacked by robbers in league with the treasurer, who had counted out the 1000 crowns with very suspicious deliberation and delay ; and he barely reached his house in safety with the gold.

The salt-cellar, which was about a foot high and of solid gold, entirely worked with the chisel and in part enamelled, delighted the king when it was eventually finished. It is now at Vienna. As a piece of workmanship it is magnificent ; but the constrained position of the nude female figure representing Earth, sitting with her back at an angle of 45 degrees, and with nothing to lean against, is very wearisome to the eye. (See plate x.)

Two other celebrated works designed by Cellini for the King of France were a large bronze[1] to fill a

[1] In describing the clay used for the casting of this bronze (*Treatises*, p. 113), Cellini says : "You take such clay as is used by the ordnance-makers for their moulds. It may be found in many

semicircular opening above the door of the Palace of Fontainebleau, and an immense fountain, in which a figure of Mars was to stand 54 feet above the ground.

The "devilries of war" between the emperor and king had been stirred up again, and Francis I.[1] was much harassed by the consequent anxieties which they caused him. It was hoped that the exhibition of the models for the works just mentioned might prove a distraction to him, and he was persuaded to look at them.

The king became quite cheerful when his thoughts were turned from war to art by Cellini's beautiful models, and his delight was intense when the artist, in showing him the model of the fountain, said :—

"I have attempted to portray your majesty, your very self, in the great central statue; for you are truly a god Mars, the greatest hero on the earth, and the only hero who never draws his sword except in the cause of piety and justice".

"Verily," exclaimed his majesty, "I have here found a man after my own heart!"

"My good fortune in pleasing such a king is far greater," said Cellini.

As to Cellini's sincerity we may observe that he expresses great regret at not having been "wide-awake enough to play the like comedy with Madame

places, but preferably near rivers. . . . Also you will find it in hills and grottoes, particularly round Rome and Florence, and in France at Paris. The clay from the latter city is the finest I ever saw. . . . You mix it with cloth frayings, about half as much of the latter as you have clay." The bronze in question is known as "The Nymph of Fontainebleau".

[1] This was in 1542.

Alinari Photo.

CRYSTAL VASE, WITH ENAMELLED GOLD COVER.

Ascribed to Cellini, and believed by some authorities to have been the little vase intended for the Duchess d'Etampes.
In the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

d'Etampes". For when the king told her that evening all that had transpired, and that Cellini had privately shown him his beautiful designs, she was intensely annoyed at his not having previously shown them to her, or even sought her favour and assistance in the matter, and she said angrily :—

"If Benvenuto had shown those things, which you say are so fine, to me, it might have been better for him in the future." This speech was reported to Cellini, who thought it prudent to regain if possible the great lady's favour. This he attempted by personally taking for her a beautiful little vase which he had made at her request. When he reached her house[1] he was informed that she was at her toilette ; and, after sending to let her know that he had come, he was told that the duchess had said : "Tell him to wait".

Cellini endeavoured to clothe himself with patience, which of all things, he declares, he found most difficult. On and on he waited! The dinner hour came. It went, and still no summons to the presence of the duchess was brought to him. At last, "maddened by hunger," he "could no longer hold out, but flung off, sending her most devoutedly to the devil".

In his wrath Cellini took the little vase (see plate xi.) to the Cardinal of Lorraine and made a present of it to him. The cardinal was delighted and whispered something to his treasurer, who, when Cellini was about to leave the house, brought him 100 crowns and offered him a glass of wine.

"For Heaven's sake, Mr. Treasurer," said Cellini,

[1] Francis I. had built a magnificent palace for her in the Rue de l'Hirondelle. See Bush's *Queens of France*, vol. i., p. 299.

"give me a mouthful of bread, for I am fainting for want of food. I have fasted since early morning at the door of Madame d'Etampes. I went to give her that vase, and took care that she should be informed of my intention; but she, out of mere petty spite, to vex me made me wait. Now I am famished. Being by nature rather bilious, fasting upsets me. At any rate, thank goodness, I have bestowed my present on some one more worthy of it than that woman for whom I had destined it."

The whole story was told to the king, and Madame d'Etampes was well laughed at for her share in it. This made her the mortal enemy of Cellini. Of Madame d'Etampes it is proposed to say something in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

MADAME D'ETAMPES.

THE beautiful Mademoiselle de Pisselen de Heilli, daughter of William de Pisselen,[1] Lord of Heilli, had been a maid of honour to the Queen Regent, mother of Francis I. With this maid of honour the king fell in love; and, even at the age of forty-six, when Cellini came to Paris,[2] and Francis had been married fifteen years, he was still at her feet. With the object of rendering her position at court less equivocal, he had found her a husband, or at least a nominal husband, in a ruined gentleman whom he made Duke d'Etampes, in order to give his lady an exalted title.[3]

The high position accorded to Madame d'Etampes may be inferred from the fact that she was allowed a carriage. At first sight this inference may appear far-fetched; but, at about the time when Cellini was in France, or at any rate, not very long before it, only two carriages were to be seen in Paris, those of the Queen and of Madame d'Etampes. Carriages within that city had been forbidden by the sumptuary laws of Charles IX. Even many years after the death of Cellini, Henry IV., in writing to Sully, told

[1] William de Pisselen had thirty children.

[2] Madame d'Etampes was then thirty-two.

[3] The Duke of Etampes was made Governor of Brittany and sent thither to govern it, while his wife remained at court.

him that he could not go to see him because the queen was using "*the* carriage".[1]

Madame d'Etampes was a woman of a very vindictive spirit, and she is said to have contrived the ruin of Chancellor Poyet because he took the side of a rival to one of her own *protégés*. A further light may be thrown on her character by the generally accepted historical evidence that, when she perceived the health of Francis I. to be failing, she tried to curry favour with his enemy, Charles V.,[2] by informing him of the most secret transactions of the French court and council. (See plate xii.)

She soon began to show her spite against Cellini. Having been laughed at before the court for losing his vase, she determined to repay him with interest for this affront.

Cellini had given a suite of apartments in his castle to his great friend, the celebrated doctor, Guido Guidi, a grandson of the famous artist, Ghirlandajo. This friend of Cellini's had been appointed by Francis I. to be his own private physician. He is called by Cellini "the most cultivated, the most affectionate, and the most companionable man of worth" he ever knew. But, besides this friend, he had other lodgers; and, when he found occasion to turn them out, they, having heard of his strained relations with Madame d'Etampes, went to her and complained of his conduct.

[1] *Ambroise Paré and his Times*, by Stephen Paget.

[2] When Charles V. visited Paris in 1540 she advised Francis I. to make him a prisoner until he would revoke the Treaty of Madrid. This the French king repeated to the emperor, who thenceforth endeavoured to gain favour with Madame d'Etampes and even to obtain her love. (Bush's *Queens of France*, vol. i., p. 302.) She is also said to have sold court secrets to Henry VIII. (*Ib.*, p. 303.)

La Comtesse d'Horrer

Comtesse de Pitti

him that he would not go to see him because the queen was using "the carriage".[1]

Madame d'Etampes was a woman of a very singular character and she is said to have contrived the exile of Chancellor Poyet because he took the side of a rival in case of [illegible] A further light may be thrown on her character by the generally accepted [illegible] Thus, when she perceived the [illegible] she tried to [illegible] by informing [illegible]

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[1] [illegible]

[2] [illegible] to make him a present [illegible] the Treaty of Madrid. Thus the French king [illegible] the emperor, who theredoubt endeavoured to get [illegible] Madame d'Etampes and even [illegible] obtain her love. (Black, *History of France*, vol. i., p. 302.) She is also said to have sold [illegible] Henry VIII. (*Ib.*, p. 303.)

La Duchesse d'Etampes.

They painted him "like the very fiend" to the king's mistress, and the king's mistress painted him "still blacker to the king". She said: "I believe that devil will sack Paris one of these days". Francis was inclined to deal severely with Cellini; but his sister, the Queen of Navarre, as well as the Dauphin, espoused Cellini's cause so cleverly that the king passed the matter off with a laugh. One reason, if not the only reason, of the opposition to Madame d'Etampes by the Dauphin in this instance, may very possibly have been that Madame d'Etampes's greatest enemy was the Dauphin's favourite, Diane de Poitiers.

But, says Cellini, "the rage of this vindictive woman kept continually on the increase"; and she conceived the idea of revenging herself by getting the king to take away from him the order for the fountain at Fontainebleau.

It will be remembered that Cellini's first offence against Madame d'Etampes had been in exhibiting the model for this fountain to Francis, without first showing it to his mistress. To bring about her end, Madame d'Etampes recommended the king to employ, for the fountain, Francesco Primaticcio,[1] of Bologna, a member of the noble family of Primaticci. Cellini admits that he was "an excellent master of design"; although he denies that modelling was "in his line of art".

Madame d'Etampes and Primaticcio pestered the king for the order: "they kept hammering at him night and day," and their leading argument was that

[1] Primaticcio was a famous worker in stucco and a painter of frescoes.

Cellini would never make the twelve candelabra—he had not yet finished one of them—if he had to execute such an enormous piece of work as the great fountain as well. Finally they prevailed, and the order was transferred to Primaticcio. When Cellini heard of this he "marched off with his good sword at his side" to the house of that artist

"Only this morning," said he to Primaticcio, "have I heard that you have filched the order for the fountain from me. I earned it by my talents, and you have robbed me of it by your tongue."

"If it is the king's will, what have you to say against it?" replied Primaticcio.

"Let us each make models, and let the king then choose between us," suggested Cellini.

"The work, having been given to me, is already mine, and I do not choose to put mine own to hazard," answered Primaticcio.

"If you will not take the right course, I will take one like your own, that is to say, an ugly and a disagreeable course — I will kill you like a dog!" exclaimed Cellini angrily.

"So long as I act honestly I have no cause for fear," said Primaticcio quietly.

The following day Primaticcio sent for Cellini and told him in a very friendly way that he had been thinking the matter over, and had come to the conclusion that Cellini ought not to be deprived of the order for the fountain, and that he should say no more about it.

In addition to his threats against Primaticcio, Cellini was making himself notorious in Paris for deeds of actual violence. Having lost a lawsuit to a *protégé*

of Madame d'Etampes, he attacked him one evening with "a great dagger," wounding him so severely in the legs that he lost the use of both of them.

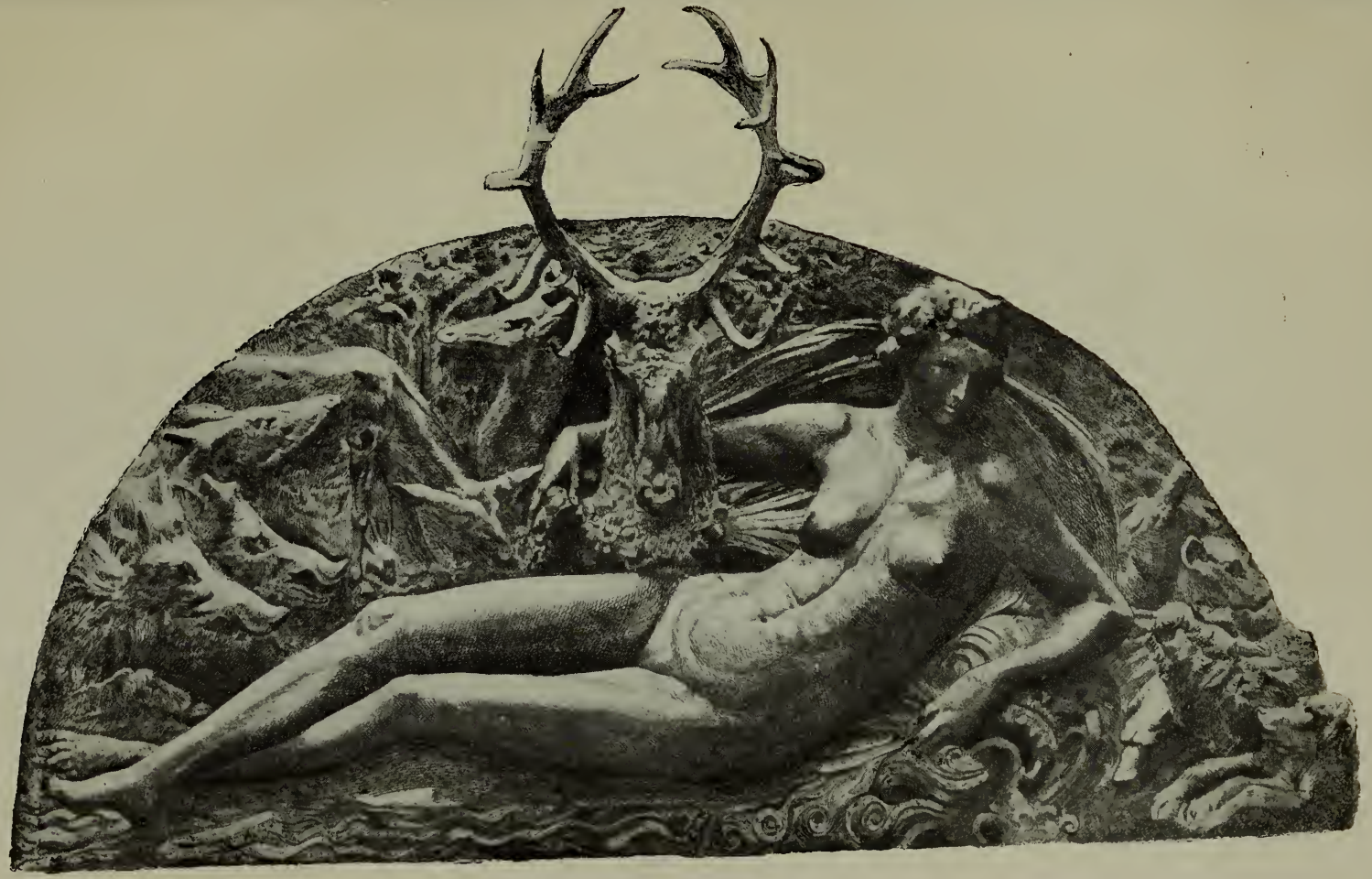
"It is I who rule the world, yet a little fellow like Benvenuto Cellini has the impudence to snap his fingers at me," said Madame d'Etampes. Determined to annoy him, she took the opportunity of "a moment of amorous weakness" in the king to wheedle him into consenting to allot to the man who distilled perfumed waters for her complexion a portion of the castle which he had already given to Cellini.

The distiller was formally installed in the castle by the king's treasurer, Jean Grolier, a very great nobleman and a celebrated collector of books and antiquities; but the notaries who assisted in putting the distiller in possession admitted, when pressed by Cellini, that an induction of this kind was rather a ceremony of custom than an action of legal importance and force.

"This hint," says Cellini, "was enough for me, and next morning I had recourse to arms; and though the job cost me some trouble, I enjoyed it. Each day that followed I made an attack with stones, pikes and arquebuses, firing, however, without ball. When I noticed one day that his defence was feeble, I entered the house by force and expelled the fellow, turning all his goods and chattels into the street. Then I betook me to the king, and told him that I had done precisely as his majesty had ordered, by defending myself against every one who sought to hinder me in his service. The king laughed at the matter, and made me out new letters-patent to secure me from further molestation."

Cellini gives a lengthy and detailed account of his immoralities and adventures with a woman called Caterina. On his own showing his conduct was infamous. It is extraordinary that he should brag and swagger over behaviour which even libertines would not hesitate to condemn. Caterina appears to have been the model who sat for the nude figure of the Nymph of Fontainebleau. (See plate xiii.)

His own account of the manner in which he treated her, when she displeased him, is incredibly shocking and disgraceful. The word *incredibly* is used with a special meaning. It is difficult to believe that even a trained ruffian—for such, as well as a trained genius, was Cellini—would deliberately record such accusations against himself, were the record absolutely or largely true. Rather does the story incline one to imagine, as do various other passages in his autobiography, that he was prompted by a literally diabolical vain-gloriousness either to invent or grossly exaggerate such feats of abominable scoundrelism as he proudly attributes to himself. Such an idea borrows probability from the fact that exactly the same trait was noted in a later and greater historical personage, who had some curious points of contact in character with Cellini. The present writer does not accept the theory that Cellini was an unmitigated liar. With the sayings of such it is not difficult to deal. Cellini's statements present those most perplexing problems, exaggerated truths, distorted facts, good stories made better and shady scenes painted blacker than the reality. Worse still, he gives at least one reader the impression of sometimes being faithfully and carefully accurate, and at others deliberately and maliciously inaccurate. Yet



Braun et Cie Photo. (*By permission of MM. Plon et Cie.*)

THE NYMPH OF FONTAINEBLEAU.
By Cellini, in the Louvre.

PLATE XIII.

are not such characters common enough in modern smoking-rooms, clubs and general society ; and how few writers of amusing letters are quite guiltless of exaggeration and scandal-mongering !

The language used in this book concerning Cellini's immoralities, and the cruelties which sometimes accompanied them, may sound strong ; but a perusal of his own descriptions of them would convince most readers that it is neither prudish nor unjustifiable.

For the present we will dismiss the subject of his profligacy to consider one of his many quarrels.

Primaticcio persuaded the king to send him to Rome to take casts of the masterpieces of antiquity, having as his object a desire to depreciate Cellini's figures by contrasting them with those of the ancient Greek sculptors. So at least Cellini tells us. But Vasari[1] says that Francis I. sent him there to purchase antiques in marble, and that of these, either in entire figures or in heads or trunks, he bought 125 ; while, at the same time, he made Barozzi da Vignola[2] and others take casts from the most famous Greek statues in Rome, casts which he brought to Paris to be copied in bronze. Vasari adds that Primaticcio induced Vignola to go to France with him to superintend the execution of the bronzes, and that so perfectly was this carried out as to render "polishing almost needless". It is interesting to learn that,[3] while Cellini accuses Primaticcio of having persuaded the king to send him to Rome, in order to bring

[1] V., 372.

[2] An architect who was employed in building St. Peter's after the designs of Michael Angelo.

[3] See footnote to Foster's *Vasari*, v., 372.

Cellini's work into disfavour, Malvasia accuses Cellini's former friend, but then enemy, Rosso, of having induced the king to send Primaticcio to Rome, with the object of ridding himself of a rival.

Be all this as it may, it is clear that Madame d'Etampes determined to make use, to Cellini's disadvantage, of the bronzes taken from the Roman antiques.

The candlestick in the form of a statue of Jupiter was now finished, and Cellini asked the king where he should bring it to show to his majesty. Madame d'Etampes, who happened to be present, suggested that no place could be more appropriate than the king's own statue-gallery. Her object in making this apparently complimentary proposal was to get Cellini's Jupiter placed among the bronzes taken from the choicest Roman antiquities, which she was well aware had just been set up there by Primaticcio.

When Cellini took his Jupiter to the gallery, and found the magnificent bronzes from the antique erected on their pedestals, he perceived the trick and exclaimed :—

"This is like running the gauntlet ; now may God assist me!"

Fortunately for Cellini the king paid his visit to the gallery at night ; and Cellini had so contrived his candlestick that the great wax candle it held should throw its light upon the silver figure and show it off to the very best advantage. He placed the candlestick upon a movable stand, and, hidden behind it, he put an apprentice, whom he instructed as to how and when he was to move it.

The king was accompanied by Madame d'Etampes,

the Dauphin and Dauphiness, the King of Navarre and others; and the first thing that caught their eye, as they entered the great gallery, was the glittering silver statue of Jupiter illuminated by the immense wax candle standing among the metal flames of the thunderbolt in Jupiter's right hand; and, as they gazed at it, the figure moved gently forwards, as if alive, into a position in front of the antiques.

The king, taken in by this meretricious effect, proclaimed the silver statue to be the finest thing he had ever seen.

"One would think you had no eyes," cried Madame d'Etampes, mad with anger at being thus out-tricked. "Don't you see all those fine bronzes from the antique behind this modern trumpery?"

"Benvenuto's work does not merely rival, it surpasses the antique!" replied the king.

"It will look very different by daylight," retorted the duchess. "And look! Cellini has had to veil part of it to conceal its faults."

He had indeed deftly wound a piece of gauze round the loins of the figure to heighten the effect and to give a life-like appearance, but no sooner had the duchess spoken than he snatched it off and tore it to pieces, in a rage. This was construed by Madame d'Etampes into an intentional affront, and she was furious. Both artist and duchess began to speak at once; and the king, at the outbreak of the storm, ordered Cellini to be silent.

> ". . . Poor women have a tongue,
> Men can stand silent and resolve on wrong.—DRYDEN.

But, while he hurried away Madame d'Etampes, he said, so that Cellini might hear him, that he had

brought from Italy the greatest artist that ever lived. The duchess "grumbled with redoubled spite" as she was led away, and Cellini says of himself: "Not being allowed to speak, I writhed my body in a rage".

But political eclipsed personal quarrels; for, shortly afterwards,[1] war again broke out between Francis I. and Charles V. and the emperor marched towards Paris, actually advancing within twenty leagues of it. It became necessary, therefore, to see carefully to the defences of the capital, and Francis I. consulted Cellini as to its fortifications. Cellini suggested plans, and the king gave orders to a great official to see that they were carried out. Now this official—"this animal," as Cellini calls him — was a creature of Madame d'Etampes, who told him to get Bellarmato[2] to give his advice in designing the fortifications, and not to attend to Cellini. This made Cellini very angry, and he threw up the work in a rage. He deals a passing blow at the duchess by remarking that she was believed to have betrayed the French king.

Presently a peace was arranged, and Francis I. began to take his ease in Paris.

"That cursed woman, Madame d'Etampes," says Cellini, abused him to the king to such an extent that his majesty, to appease her, promised to have nothing more to do with him. Some one about the court went to Cellini in his workshop and told him of the king's promise, which so infuriated him that

[1] In August, 1544.

[2] A very celebrated military architect, who had been banished from Italy for political reasons. He designed Havre harbour; and he must have been infinitely better qualified than a goldsmith to fortify a city.

he threw his tools to the opposite side of the building and there and then began preparations for leaving France. Then he went to the king, who gave him a gracious smile, and said that he would go at once to his workshop and see his beautiful things.

This promise his majesty did not keep; but he went there the next day, after having heard "that biting tongue" of the duchess call Cellini one of the worst and most deadly enemies of the crown of France, and having assured her that his only motive in visiting Cellini "was to administer such a scolding as should make him tremble in his shoes".

In a measure he kept his word; for he remonstrated seriously with Cellini for delaying and putting on one side works expressly ordered, and working instead upon objects, beautiful in themselves, but neither ordered nor desired by the king. At the same time he said many kind things; and he bade him farewell with the very friendly and familiar phrase—"*Adieu, mon ami*".

Although the King of France had made peace with the emperor, he was still at war with the English, and Cellini observes that "these devils" were keeping him in constant anxiety.[1] Francis, therefore, had other matters engaging his attention besides works of art, and for several months he sent Cellini neither money nor orders. For want of something to do, that artist made two large vases with his own silver; and, when they were finished, he took them to a place several days' journey from Paris, at which he knew the king to be staying. Francis was much pleased with the vases; but, when Cellini begged to be allowed, now

[1] In 1544 Henry VIII. took Boulogne.

that wars were going on and causing a slackness in artistic work, to go to Italy for a time, the king "shot a terrible glance" at Cellini, and said in an angry voice :—

"Benvenuto, you are a great fool. Take these vases back to Paris for I want to have them gilded."

Not long afterwards the king, in the presence of Madame d'Etampes and one of his principal generals, was talking about Cellini, and he expressed a wish to keep him in France. The general observed that he knew a very simple method of doing that ; and, on being pressed by the king to describe it, he said with a smile :—

"I would hang that Benvenuto of yours by the neck, and then you would keep him for ever in your kingdom".

"He richly deserves it!" cried Madame d'Etampes, to please whom this speech had been made.

"I have no objection whatever to your hanging him, if you will find me as good an artist to take his place," said the king.

This conversation appears to have been repeated to Cellini. As the old proverb has it—"If enough mud be thrown at a person, some of it will stick to him" ; and, much as Francis I. appreciated Cellini's work, he was probably beginning to tire somewhat of the man, with his evil repute, his violence, his ill-temper, his eccentricities, and his habit of working at what pleased himself, rather than at what pleased his employer. Cellini, on his part, perceived that he was falling out of favour, and this, with the want of orders, hastened him in his determination to leave France.

He then went to the Cardinal of Ferrara and obtained from him a quasi-permission to leave the country; and after waiting three weeks he started for Italy, taking the two silver vases with him. Messengers from the court overtook him, demanding the vases and certain silver which it was said was the king's. All these he delivered up. Of attempting to carry off anything belonging to his employer he acquits himself, and perhaps we may as well accept his own verdict; but it cannot be forgotten that this was not the first time such an accusation had been made against him.

It only remains to be said here that, in spite of certain of his grumblings, Cellini was better paid by the King of France than by any other of his employers. He may not always have got what the king had promised; but he certainly received very large sums. It is interesting to observe how a professedly Catholic king could rob the Church, when we read of Francis I. giving orders that Cellini should have the emoluments of the first abbey, worth 2000 crowns a year, that might fall vacant; or, failing that, the emoluments of two or even three abbeys which would make up the amount.

In three years after Cellini had left France, Francis I. was dead. Then, as was wickedly said, Diane de Poitiers ascended the throne with Henri II., and Madame d'Etampes's only hope of safety lay in living in retirement upon the immense wealth which she had amassed during her prosperity. Having then obtained high ecclesiastical dignities for her brothers and sisters, she now turned round and became a sanctimonious Calvinist. Mezerai[1] says rather severely:

[1] *Hist. de Hen.*, ii., i., p. 34.

"The Duchess d'Etampes had led publicly for one-and-twenty years a dissolute life; and Calvinism appeared to her the most proper of all sects to still the remorse of conscience; because, on one side, it took away the necessity of confession; and, on the other, declared that all men were equally the enemies of God, and were distinguished from one another only by an imputative righteousness".

Well! It may be so. On the other hand no religion is so open-armed to the repentant sinner, or so readily, or so easily smooths the path to a better life, as that which Madame d'Etampes deserted.

CHAPTER IX.

FLORENCE.

AFTER the events described in the last chapter, and some time in the year 1545, Cellini went to Florence, which then became practically his home for the remainder of his life. He arrived there at about the time of the convocation of the Council of Trent, an affair of which he makes no mention, and one which probably interested him little, if at all.

During his absence he had constantly assisted his sister, whom he now found with six daughters, the eldest marriageable and the youngest at nurse. To these nieces Cellini was most generous. Cosimo de" Medici mentions this in a letter to Queen Catherine de' Medici, adding, "I have been no less satisfied with his virtuous conduct towards them than with the beauty of his works of art".[1]

Eight years had elapsed since Cosimo de' Medici had been elected Lord of Florence, and he was even now only twenty-five. Calm, reserved and unpretentious, though dignified in manner, in natural disposition he was bold, ambitious, despotic, tyrannical and deceitful. When, at the early age of seventeen, he was suddenly raised from an obscure position to the heights of sovereignty, and that a tottering sovereignty, he at once gave up all juvenile tastes

[1] See Plon's *Cellini*, p. 109.

and amusements, and concentrated his energies upon the exceptional difficulties of the government of Florence. He conducted his rule in a spirit of profound unscrupulousness, diabolical dissimulation, and ruthless revenge.

If Cosimo de' Medici was not perfect himself, he made some show of enforcing perfection in others.

He forbade all Florentine women, of whatever rank, to wear jewels, except in chaplets or rosaries, although he seems afterwards to have relaxed this law; and he made sumptuary regulations respecting almost every article of clothing, according to the position in life of the wearer. On the other hand, as we have already shown, rules regulating the dress, the entertainments, and even the food of the Florentines, were no new thing. Nor were their private customs so perfect as to need no legislation. For instance, that of betting upon the sex of their expected children had become so common among the Florentine mothers that exchanges of babies sometimes took place; and Duke Cosimo can scarcely be blamed for officious severity in having declared such bets to be illegal unless made with the consent of the husband in the presence of a judge.

Whatever may have been the merits or demerits of Duke Cosimo as a ruler, he had the most important of all qualifications in the eyes of Cellini. He was a patron of art! Although but ill-educated, he inherited the taste, or at least the reverence, for science,[1] art

[1] Cosimo and his son and successor, Francis, are said to have invented the bombshell between them, but they did not sufficiently develop their invention to make it explode when they wished it to do so; and when they suggested to Philip II. and Don John of Austria

and literature which, through several generations, had been innate in the family of the Medici. He employed Bronzino, Vasari, Buontalenti, Giovanni da Bologna; he strove hard to induce Michael Angelo to join his service at Florence, and he instituted the Florentine Academies both of Painting and of Literature. The historian Varchi, who wrote of Cellini —

> [1] Among the mighty dead he had no peers,
> Nor shall earth see his like,

although a devotee of the very liberty which Duke Cosimo spent his life in zealously suppressing, was employed by that tyrant in writing history. The duke also commissioned Ammirato to write a general history of Florence. Among other undertakings Duke Cosimo made the Boboli Gardens and built a great part of the Pitti Palace.[2] It was wise, therefore, in Cellini to place his services at the disposal of such a potentate, when he had fallen out of favour with the Pope and with the King of France; it may have been wise, too, to hint that, unless lavishly paid, he would leave Florence for Paris, there to work, again, for Francis I.

Duke Cosimo received Cellini very kindly and said:—

"I am ready to pay you far better than you were paid by the foreign king, of whom your generous nature prompts you to speak so gratefully."

that it should be used in war, the Spanish engineers thought it more likely to injure those who used it than their enemies (see Napier's *Florentine History*, v., p. 262).

[1] Symonds's *Cellini*, p. 167.

[2] The Pitti Palace was begun by that great enemy of the Medici, Luca Pitti, about the year 1435. It was sold in an unfinished state to Eleonora, wife of Duke Cosimo, in 1559.

And then he proceeded to order from Cellini a large bronze statue of Perseus, to stand in the famous Loggia dei Lanzi.[1] Close to its future site, Michael Angelo's David already typified the victory of the humble over the tyrant, while Donatello's Judith represented justifiable regicide. Both of these great works were distasteful to Duke Cosimo, who wished to counteract their symbolic influences by erecting near them a statue of Perseus, holding in his hand the head of Medusa, to signify his own victory over the Gorgon of republicanism, rebellion, and tyrannicide.

In a few weeks Cellini had finished a wax model for the Perseus, probably the waxen figure now in the Bargello. This so pleased the duke that he gave Cellini orders to carry out the work. To this Cellini acceded rather too readily, and without making sufficient stipulations for the materials, assistance, and conveniences requisite for such an enormous and difficult undertaking. He had not yet discerned that, owing to the mercenary blood inherited by Cosimo de' Medici, he "was more a merchant than a duke," and Cellini made the mistake of treating him "as if he were dealing with a prince, and not with a man of commerce".

Cosimo committed the arrangements for securing a house, in which to carry out the work, to his major-domo, Pier Franscesco Riccio, who had formerly been his tutor. Cellini calls this fellow a "donkey," and

[1] When he first assumed the government, Cosimo thought it prudent to have a foreign regiment as a protection against the Florentines; and for this purpose he raised a body of Swiss, or German Landsknechts. The Italians called them Lanzi, and, as one of their guardhouses was near the Loggia, they were often to be seen in it; and thus it came to bear their name.

Varchi represents him as a conceited fool. Riccio passed the matter on to Garini, "a flimsy little fellow, with tiny, spider's hands, and a small gnat's voice," who for a long time did nothing.

Cellini now began to lose courage. His preparations were moving at a snail's pace; he saw that "many thousands of ducats had recently been squandered upon ugly pieces of bad sculpture turned out by that beast of a Buaccio Bandinelli" [1] and news had come from France that things were going very much against his interests in that country.

In the face of great difficulties Cellini persevered and made some progress; but he could only get little boys to help him; for the "brute," Bandinelli, who greatly resented the advent of Cellini as a rival, prevented workmen from coming to his assistance. After some time Cellini tried to teach a youth of eighteen, who had been acting as his groom and gardener, to work in his shop, and "by degrees he learned the art".

To goldsmiths and castors of bronzes, as well as to sculptors, skilled workmen are obviously of the utmost importance; and Cellini warns his professional readers to leave certain processes of gilding to their men. "Now, though of a truth," says he,[2] "the prime merit of every craft is your being well able to practise it yourself, yet none the less it were better to leave these processes of gilding to those who are specialists, for it is, as I said, very unhealthy to practise. Know *how* it's done, that's all."

[1] As a play upon Bandinelli's name of Baccio, Cellini calls him Buaccio, or the great Ox.

[2] *Treatises*, p. 104.

Owing to overwork, Cellini suffered temporarily from pain in the loins, and had to take things somewhat easily. He availed himself of this opportunity to model a more than life-sized bust (see plate xiv.) of the duke, which pleased its subject immensely. Cosimo now told Cellini to make his workshop at the palace ; as he wished to be able to amuse himself by looking in when he felt so disposed ; and there Cellini was supplied with every convenience, including excellent furnaces for casting in bronze.

Meanwhile unpleasant letters and messages came from France. First there had been a regular outcry of " stop, thief ! " when Cellini had gone off with the vases which the king had bespoken. Then the king had inquired why Cellini, who was supposed to have gone to Italy on a visit only, did not come back to Paris to work for him according to his engagement. When told that Cellini was doing well in Italy, the king had said : " I shall not recall him ; let him stay where he is ". Next a message came from the king that, if Cellini did not intend to return to France, it behoved him to send a detailed and very accurate account of his works and receipts, while in that country, because some very ugly rumours, which his majesty was loth to believe, were rife concerning them. Cellini replied that, if the king summoned him, he would fly to France to give an account of his conduct. The king however never did summon him, probably deciding, on mature consideration, that, of the two evils, the return of such a firebrand would be greater than the loss of his workmanship.

The account given by Cellini, in his *Treatises*, of the circumstances attendant on his leaving France

Alinari Photo.

BUST OF COSIMO DE' MEDICI.
By Cellini, in the Museo Nazionale, Florence.

and not returning thither, scarcely tallies with that given in his autobiography. As to this matter, only one quotation shall be made here from the *Treatises*.[1] "When they heard in France that I was working in Florence for the Grand Duke Cosimo, his majesty took it very ill indeed, and said on several occasions: 'Didn't I tell Benvenuto that he was a dull fool?'"

Long afterwards, when both Francis I. and his successor Henri II. were dead, the widow of the latter instructed Baccio del Bene, who was an envoy to Florence entrusted with the negotiations of a loan for France, that he should endeavour to bring back Cellini, in order that that artist might adorn the tomb of her late husband. Baccio mentioned the matter to Duke Cosimo, who, not wishing to lose the services of Cellini, told him that that artist had given up work. Meeting Cellini, Baccio repeated what the duke had said, whereupon Cellini yielded to one of his violent fits of temper, in which he heartily abused the duke. The next time that Baccio met his excellency, "the good-natured gentleman," says Cellini, "repeated to the duke what I had answered". Much dissatisfaction followed, and the upshot of the affair was that the queen dropped the negotiations through fear of offending Duke Cosimo.

I will pass lightly over a very ugly incident in the life of Cellini. This was an accusation against him of a most detestable offence by the mother of his boy apprentice. So compromising was Cellini's position, that he thought it wise to fly from Florence and to seek a refuge in Venice. There he received "the

[1] *Treatises*, p. 144.

warmest welcome which could be imagined" from Lorenzino, the murderer of Alessandro de' Medici, and the two assassins made "good cheer" together.

While at Venice, Cellini paid a visit to "the admirable painter, Titian," and altogether he appears to have spent a very pleasant time in that charming city, until letters from Florence assured him of the protection of the grand duke, when he ventured to return thither.

This portion of Cellini's life was much affected by his quarrels with Bandinelli,[1] the son of his first master, Michael Angelo, the Florentine goldsmith. Their first recorded quarrel came about in this manner. At the time when he was chiefly engaged in working for Clement VII. in Rome, Cellini had just received an order from his holiness, when Bandinelli came up and said :—

"When these goldsmiths aspire to such fine work as that, we ought to make drawings for them".

This greatly irritated Cellini, who replied that he did not want Bandinelli's drawings for his workmanship; but hoped soon with his workmanship to show that there was a good deal wanting in Bandinelli's drawings.

I hope that I have not shown any undue partiality to Benvenuto Cellini, and I have endeavoured to do justice to his enemies; but it is only fair to say that Vasari, who was not a particular friend of Cellini, says much against Baccio Bandinelli.[2] The man

[1] Perhaps Bandinelli may be best known to English visitors to Rome for his restoration of the right arm of the Laocoon in the Vatican Galleries.

[2] Vol. iv., pp. 232-95.

"lived in a perpetual succession of lawsuits"; he was "detested for his boastful prating, his continual evil speaking of others, and his hatred of Michael Angelo"; he was "very quarrelsome and jealous of the works of other artists," and he was always trying to persuade the authorities to take work away from others and to give it to himself. Vasari tells us that Bandinelli made a counterfeit key of the room in the Bargello, in which hung a famous cartoon by Michael Angelo, and that, stealthily entering this chamber during the Florentine riots, he "cut the cartoon into numerous pieces".

Vasari mentions, among Bandinelli's meannesses, his having asked Andrea del Sarto to paint his portrait, with the object of gaining some hints as to that painter's manner of working and of finding out what colours he used. Knowing the man's character, Andrea del Sarto suspected his motives, put some of every colour he possessed upon his palette, and would not allow Bandinelli to see the canvas until the portrait was finished.

Bandinelli's very susceptible jealousy was greatly excited at the employment by the Grand Duke of a mere goldsmith like Cellini on a highly important work of sculpture, such as the projected Perseus. He therefore endeavoured to persuade Cosimo that Cellini would not even know enough of the craft to put together the pieces of such an enormous bronze as that contemplated. The duke was so far influenced by the advice of Bandinelli as to withdraw part of the allowance which he had thus far granted for workmen employed upon the Perseus; and Cellini, by his own account, had to defray a large portion of

the subsequent expenses of its production out of his own pocket.

In order to counteract the evil machinations of Bandinelli, Cellini conceived the idea of bribing the Grand Duchess by presenting her with some very small but exquisitely wrought silver-gilt vases. With these she was much pleased, and she accepted the workmanship, though she insisted on paying the value of the metals. Then Cellini begged her to persuade the duke to be less ready in believing what he heard from the evil tongue of Bandinelli.

One day Cellini rode to Fiesole to see a natural son of his, whom he had put out at nurse there. On his way back towards Florence, he met Bandinelli, who was going to visit a farm which he held not very far from the city. In an instant the idea occurred to Cellini that this would be a splendid opportunity of murdering Bandinelli, and he would have availed himself of it, had not the sight of the entirely unarmed man, riding "a sorry donkey," caused him to reflect that an assassination under such conditions would not redound to his own honour. So he contented himself with saying: "Fear not, vile coward! I shall not condescend to smite you."

The Grand Duke consulted Cellini respecting a broken antique statue, representing the trunk of the body of a boy, which had been sent to him by Stefano Colonna, a distinguished general, who had served successively in the Spanish, French, and Florentine armies.

"Your grace," said Cellini, "this is a statue in Greek marble, and it is a miracle of beauty! If your excellency permits, I should like to restore it, giving

it a head and arms and feet, and I will add an eagle, in order that we may christen it 'The Lad Ganymede'. It is certainly not my business to patch up statues, that being the trade of botchers who do it in all conscience villanously ill; yet the art displayed by this great master of antiquity cries out to me to help him."

While Cellini was explaining the beauties of the fragment to the duke, Bandinelli entered. "Your grace," said he, "this exactly illustrates the truth of what I have so often told your excellency, namely, that the ancients were wholly ignorant of anatomy, and that, therefore, their works abound in mistakes."

"Benvenuto," said the duke, "speak a word in defence of my statue."

"Your grace must please to understand," replied Cellini, "that Baccio Bandinelli is, and ever has been, bad by nature; therefore everything he sees, however good it may be, looks bad to his ungracious eyes. I, who incline to the good, see the truth with a purer vision."

During this speech, says Cellini, "Bandinelli writhed and made the most ugly faces which could be imagined by the mind of man, his face itself being by nature hideous beyond measure". The duke, on the contrary, was much amused, and the two sculptors, each in a towering passion, followed him to a seat, on either side of which they took their stands.

The conversation then turned upon Bandinelli's Hercules and Cacus, the commission for which he had contrived to get transferred from Michael Angelo to himself. On being placed beside Michael Angelo's David, the statue had been greatly ridiculed. Bandinelli now admitted that a hundred sonnets, "full of

the worst abuse which could be written by the ignorant rabble," had appeared about it. And then he abused the critics, much after the fashion of modern artists and authors when their works do not meet with unqualified praise.

A hundred sonnets had been written in honour of Michael Angelo's works in the sacristy of St. Lorenzo's, retorted Cellini, remarking that both sculptors got their deserts.

"What is wrong with my work?" inquired Bandinelli.

"You shall not hear my own opinion, but that of the best critics in Florence," replied Cellini, who was annoyed by observing that Bandinelli was mimicking him. "They say that, if the hair were shaved from your Hercules, there would not be skull enough to hold his brains; that it is difficult to decide whether his features are those of a lion, a man, or an ox; that the position of the head and neck are as graceless as they are inartistic; that his sprawling shoulders resemble the pommels of an ass's pack-saddle; that, instead of the muscular development of human limbs, you have represented the lumpiness of a sack full of melons; that his loins resemble a pair of lanky pumpkins; that his legs do not seem to belong to his body; that no one can tell upon which of them he is standing; that his arms are the work of a sculptor who has never studied a naked model; that the Hercules and the Cacus have got the calf of one leg between them; that one of the feet of Hercules is underground while the other seems to be resting on hot coals; and that he is leaning forward in a most ungraceful attitude."

On this Bandinelli, in a fury, assailed Cellini with

the grossest of all possible insults. Cellini retorted with a piece of sarcasm which changed the duke's frowns into merriment. Indeed he and his attendants laughed immoderately, while Cellini, with the appearance of pleasantry, was inwardly raging at the thought that "the foulest villain who ever breathed" should have dared in the presence of so great a prince to cast an insult of that atrocious nature in "his teeth".

Many sharp repartees passed between the disputants, "much to the entertainment of the" Grand Duke, until Cellini told "the dirty, stupid scoundrel" that unless he behaved himself he would "most certainly rip the wind out of his carcase". "Prepare thyself for another world, Baccio, for I mean to be myself the means of sending thee out of this."[1]

"Let me know a day beforehand," replied Bandinelli, "that I may confess and make my will, so as not to die a brute such as thou art." This retort is recorded by Vasari. Cellini does not mention it.

Then "the words that passed between us were awful," says Cellini. The duke, in fits of laughter, tried to reprove and to silence the combatants.

"I humbly crave your grace's pardon," said Cellini in apology. "But one fool makes a hundred; and the follies of this particular fool have for the moment blinded me to the glories of your most illustrious excellency."

Cellini attacked Bandinelli with his pen as well as with his tongue. In one of his sonnets he admitted that he himself had massacred men, but that their bodies lay decently hidden beneath the earth, whereas Bandinelli, said he, had massacred marbles which were still standing and, to his infinite shame, still visible.

[1] Vasari, iv., pp. 281, 282.

CHAPTER X.

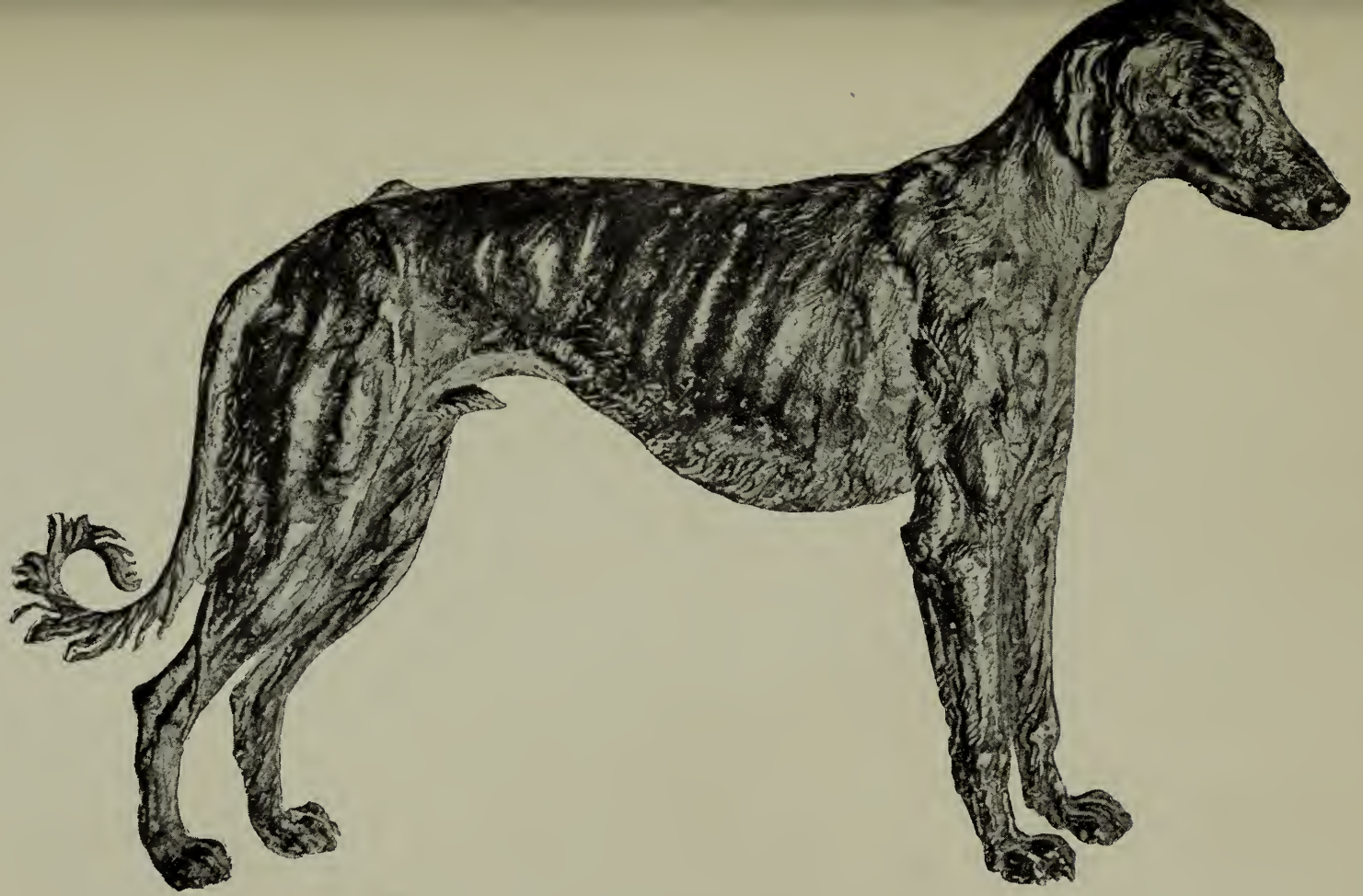
THE PERSEUS.

By dint of hard labour and by means of hiring workmen with his own money, Cellini got on with his Perseus, in the face of great difficulties, until the mould was ready for the bronze. He had made several experiments with the various Florentine clays in making moulds for bronzes. The bas-relief of a dog (see plate xv.) had been one of them ; the large bust of the grand duke had served for another ; and now the figure of Medusa, which was to lie beneath the feet of Perseus, had come out so admirably that he felt confident of being equally successful with the great and ambitious bronze figure of Perseus himself.

The duke was not so certain on this point. He had been listening to Bandinelli, and, primed with his objections, he argued the matter with Cellini. " I profess myself a connoisseur, and I thoroughly understand the laws of the art of bronze casting," said he.

" Yes. Like a prince—not like an artist ! " retorted Cellini. The wrangle continued. The duke feared that the head of the Perseus could not come out in the bronze. Cellini, on the contrary, was confident as to the head, but feared for the foot.

" I verily believe," said the duke to his attendants, " that this Benvenuto prides himself on contradicting everything that I say," and he went away shaking his head.



Alinari Photo.

A Greyhound.

Bas-relief in Bronze, by Cellini, in the Museo Nazionale, Florence.

Cellini was left discouraged, and the loss of all hope that he might induce the duke to renew subsidies for the expenses of the Perseus made him fear lest his own private resources should not last out the work. Happily they just did so!

The casting of the Perseus caused Cellini considerable anxiety.[1] At last the mould was sunk in its pit, with its many little earthenware tubes to act as air vents. Then Cellini turned to his furnace which was "filled with numerous pigs of copper and other bronze stuff". So careful was he that he did most of the work himself. His labours were greatly increased by his workshop taking fire, and by a storm of wind and rain preventing the furnace from working properly.

At the last moment, when everything was ready, Cellini was suddenly attacked by fever, and, unable to work longer, he turned to his ten or more workmen and asked them to proceed with the casting after the manner in which he had often instructed them, saying: "The metal will soon be fused. You cannot go wrong." Then he went into his house and threw himself on his bed, exclaiming: "I shall not be alive to-morrow. I feel that I am dying."

He then describes what his men did in the meantime. "Well! instead of doing what they were told, they began larking about and neglected the furnace, so that the metal commenced to curdle, or, as it is called in the craft, to cake. Never a one knew a remedy for this blunder."

Cellini was lying in severe "physical pain and

[1] This account of the casting of the Perseus is taken partly from the *Life of Cellini* and partly from the *Treatises*.

moral dejection," with his housekeeper weeping at his side, when one of his men entered his chamber and, in a doleful voice, like one who announces their last hour to men condemned to die upon the scaffold, spoke these words :—

"O Benvenuto, resign yourself to the worst, the furnace must have been badly made, for the metal has caked ! "

With a "howl," Cellini "leapt from his bed and literally frightened away that grievous fever with the biting words he shouted at those fellows. The maids," his lad, and all who came to help him, "got kicks or blows of the fist." Rapidly dressing, he rushed to the workshop, where he found that, but too truly, the metal had curdled. Having sent across the road for a load of oak wood, stacked by the house of a butcher, he thrust it into the grate beneath the furnace. This was contrary to all the laws of casting, as elder, willow and pine were the only woods generally used for that purpose ; but Cellini perceived the only hope to lie in obtaining "the greatest possible heat," for which old, dry oak was well suited. While he was doing this the rain fell in torrents, and he ordered carpets and other hangings to be put up as a protection. By means of piling on wood and stirring with pokers and iron rods, Cellini and his men made a tremendous fire ; and then he "ordered half a pig of pewter to be brought, which weighed about 60 lb., and flung it into the middle of the cake inside the furnace".

Presently the curdled mass began to liquefy, and Cellini knew that he "had brought the dead to life again". Vigour, says he, filled his veins, and the pains of fever and the fear of death were forgotten.

"All of a sudden an explosion took place, attended by a tremendous flash of flame, as though a thunderbolt had formed and been discharged among us. All were terror-struck, I myself above the rest. When the din was over and the dazzling light had subsided, we began to look each other in the face. Then I discovered that the cap of the furnace had blown up and the bronze was bubbling over."

Cellini was overjoyed, and he had the mouths of the mould immediately opened to allow the molten metal to run into it. Then he was alarmed at observing how slowly it flowed, and he rightly inferred that this was owing to all the alloy having been consumed by the use of a fire far fiercer than any permitted by the precepts of bronze-casters. To use such a fire was necessary as a desperate remedy; but such a divergence from the rules of the craft brought its attendant penalties. All threatened once more to be spoiled.

Cellini's pigs of pewter were exhausted, but not so his ingenuity. In his dilemma, he sent for all the pewter platters, porringers and dishes in his house, to the number of about 200, and he threw them one by one into the furnace and its channels. To his intense relief, the metal by degrees began to flow more and more freely, until it completely and successfully filled the mould. Then he thanked God; the fever just "went to the devil," and master and men sat down together to eat and to drink with hearty appetite.

It would yet be some time before the various portions of the great work would be finished and ready to be put together and erected; but Cellini felt that, in casting the figure of Perseus, the main difficulty had been overcome. After allowing it two days to

cool, he carefully and anxiously uncovered his bronze and found it all that he could wish.

The Grand Duke was at Pisa, and thither Cellini hurried to inform him of his success. Cosimo and the Grand Duchess gave him a most gracious reception. Having practically mastered his great work, and observing that the duke was pleased with him, he took the opportunity of begging for leave to go for a short time to Rome, and this was granted to him without demur.

Shortly before this time Cellini had received a letter from Michael Angelo complimenting him upon a bust which Cellini had lately made of Bindo Altoviti, the Tuscan consul at Rome.

"My dear Benvenuto," it began, "I have known you for many years as the greatest goldsmith of whom we have any information; and henceforward I shall know you for a sculptor of like quality."

This letter Cellini showed to the Grand Duke, who said, "If you can persuade Michael Angelo to return to Florence I will make him a member of the Forty-eight," an assemblage which corresponded to a senate.

When Cellini reached Rome, he stayed with the Tuscan Consul, to whom he lent some money at 15 per cent.; yet, despite this "miserable bargain" for the lender, the ungrateful borrower was "never good humoured, but always surly". Cellini lost no time in trying to tempt Michael Angelo into going to Florence; but the great man said that, being employed in building St. Peter's, he could not leave Rome. To this Cellini replied that Michael Angelo might trust the work to his foreman, and he expatiated upon the liberality and rich promises of the Grand Duke.

"And you!" said Michael Angelo, with a sarcastic smile. "To what extent are *you* satisfied with him? No! I cannot leave Rome."

This answer proved to Cellini that Michael Angelo was "acquainted with the greater part of his annoyances".

Julius III. was now Pope, and Cellini hastened to kiss his feet and to offer him his services; for, as he tells us, after all his difficulties and troubles at Florence, he would gladly have taken up his quarters at Rome again. But he adds, "I soon perceived that the ambassador had countermined me". This ambassador was the envoy of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Well indeed might he warn the Pope against a man of such murderous and immoral propensities as Cellini! But he may also have thought that the Grand Duke would object to losing his services.

No other Pope patronised Cellini. Those who reigned during the last fifteen years of his life were rather men of gold than patrons of goldsmiths. Marcellus II., who sat on the papal throne for about three weeks only, was both excellent as a private individual and well-intentioned as a pope. Concerning his successor, Paul IV., even Ranke allows that, if he was wanting in tact and prudence and was too severe in his rule, he was blameless as a man and zealous as a Christian; and, although the same historian accuses the next Pope, St. Pius V., of "sour bigotry," he admits his "singleness of purpose, magnanimity, and profound religious feeling".

Even of Clement VII. and Paul III. Cellini does not show us the brightest sides; and of their

successors, who were not men to his taste, he tells us nothing. Of all ecclesiastics he preferred rather to say a bad word than a good one ; and he seemed to be of the opinion of Butler, in thinking that—

> . . . in the wicked there's no vice
> Of which the saints have not a spice.
> —*Hudibras.*

Yet many readers consider his autobiography the interesting evidence of an eyewitness to the depravity of the popes, cardinals, bishops, and clergy of his day. He was a witness, it is true ; but a witness who gave evidence solely for the prosecution. In the documents bearing upon the life of his contemporaries, St. Philip and St. Ignatius of Loyola, constant mention occurs of Italian priests of extraordinary sanctity.

This treatise, however, is concerned rather with art and artists than with priests and piety ; and it may be more to its purpose to point out a great reform which took place before Cellini's death in art as connected with religion. During the first half of the sixteenth century, melodies, which had begun life in popular ballads, sonnets, lays, madrigals and romances, were introduced into the music of high masses to such an extent as to excite ridicule in the very presence of the sacred mysteries of the altar. Against such an abuse a strong and wholesome reaction set in, which culminated when Palestrina was appointed composer to the papal choir in 1565.[1]

Cellini soon left Rome and returned to Florence, confident of enjoying the favour of the Grand Duke,

[1] Capecelatro, ii., pp. 84-94.

Alinari Photo.

ELEONORA DI TOLEDO, WIFE OF THE GRAND DUKE COSIMO DE MEDICI.
By Bronzino, in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

and of receiving rich rewards for his success with the Perseus.

Cosimo was then at Castello, whither Cellini went to find him. To his astonishment, the Grand Duke received him very rudely, and intimated that he might go about his business. Much hurt and discouraged, Cellini went back to Florence, racking his brains to conceive what could have brought about this sudden and unexpected change in the duke's demeanour. He came gradually to the conclusion that his enemy, the major-domo, must have been traducing him; be that, however, as it may, the duke before long took him into favour again.

So far, so good! But it was one thing to be in favour with the Grand Duke, and another to be in favour with the Grand Duchess; although, as a rule, losing the patronage of the duchess entailed losing that of the duke. Eleonora de Toledo (see plate xvi.), the wife of Duke Cosimo, was a very charitable woman, and Vasari goes so far as to call[1] her "a lady excellent above all that had ever lived, and whose infinite merits render her worthy of eternal praise". But, if richly endowed with virtues, she was no less richly dowered with Spanish pride; and the crowd of Spanish courtiers, with whom she surrounded herself to the partial exclusion of the Florentine dames, rendered her somewhat unpopular in her husband's capital and country. The Florentine nobility were not the less obliged to throw themselves at her feet; for, owing to her paramount influence over the Grand Duke, her favour became the principal channel of promotion

[1] Vol. v., pp. 469, 470.

and advancement; and she participated to a large extent in the administration of the Grand Duke's country.

Eleonora is said to have been an inveterate gambler and to have lost immense sums at play; and, in order to please her, the Grand Duke himself gambled very freely. But, if he usually yielded to her requests in the end, he did not always consent to them at the first asking.

While Cellini was at work upon his Perseus, the duchess had taken a great fancy to a necklace of very large pearls, which she wished the duke to purchase for her, and the idea struck her that a jeweller so famous as Cellini, and so much in the duke's favour, would be her best advocate in the matter. She had indeed been for some time most kind in giving Cellini commissions; although he "saw very little of her money". Showing the pearls to him, she said: "I should like the duke to buy them for me; so I beg you, my dear Benvenuto, to praise them to him as highly as you can".

Cellini tried to dissuade her from asking the duke to make the purchase, because his professional experience enabled him to detect very grave faults in the pearls; some of them being neither round nor well-matched, while others were faded.

To his objections the duchess would not listen. She had a fancy for the pearls, and the pearls she would have.

Their price was 6000 crowns, and, if Cellini could persuade the duke to pay this price, she would present Cellini with a commission of 200 crowns. "I have a mind to possess those pearls," said she, "so

prithee, take them to the duke, and praise them up to the skies; even if you have to use some words beyond the bounds of truth, speak them to do me service. It will be well for you!" she added meaningly.

On his own showing, Cellini managed the affair very clumsily. First he lied freely to the duke in praising the pearls far beyond what he considered to be their value. Secondly, when the duke said that he did not intend to buy them because he did not think them worth their price, Cellini lied still more strongly by declaring them to be the finest pearls ever put together. Thirdly, when hard pressed by the duke, he blushed and faltered, and finally he confessed that, instead of being worth 6000 crowns, they were not worth more than 2000.

"I shall make a mortal foe of the duchess by telling you this!" said Cellini.

"If you have confidence in me, you need not stand in fear of anything whatever," replied the duke. Presently the duchess came up and begged her husband to buy the pearls because Cellini had said, "He never saw a finer row".

A wrangle followed, at the end of which the duke said to her, in Cellini's hearing:—

"My lady! my Benvenuto here has told me that, if I purchase this necklace, I shall be throwing my money away".

At this the duchess looked very spitefully in the direction of Cellini, and gave him a threatening nod.

And, after all, she got her pearls.[1] She went to

[1] Possibly these may have been the very pearls which appear in her portrait. (See plate xvi.)

another jeweller, Bernadone, a mortal foe of Cellini, promised him a much higher commission than that which she had offered to his rival, and sent him to the duke.

"Ah, my dear lord, for heaven's sake buy this necklace for the poor duchess who cannot live without it," pleaded the goldsmith.

"Get away with you, or blow out your cheeks for me to smack them," said the duke angrily.

And Bernadone did blow out his cheeks and Cosimo did smack them until the tears came into the victim's eyes.

"Lo! my lord," whined the goldsmith, "I am a faithful servant, who will gladly bear any ill-treatment, provided only that my poor lady gets her heart's desire."

"Get away, with God's curse upon you," said the Grand Duke. "Go make the bargain, I am willing to do what my lady, the duchess, desires."

In her anger against Cellini, the duchess forthwith began to patronise his rival, Bandinelli. The upshot, therefore, of the affair was that the duchess obtained her pearls, Bandinelli obtained a friend, and Cellini obtained an enemy. For the moment, however, the duke was on even better terms than usual with Cellini.

Some little antique bronze statuettes, covered with earth and rust, had been found near Arezzo, and it amused the Grand Duke to clean them with small goldsmith's chisels. He held and guided the chisels, while Cellini hit them with a little hammer; and thus they spent several pleasant evenings. To reach the chamber in which the duke did this work, Cellini had

to pass through the private passages and apartments of the Palazzo Vecchio. Meeting him in those regions annoyed and inconvenienced the Grand Duchess, and on one of these occasions she told him that he had "grown to be a great nuisance".

When Cellini had finished the small bronze figures which adorn the pedestal of the Perseus, he arranged them in a row for his patron's inspection. The duchess was as much pleased with them as was the duke.

"Do not let these exquisite little figures be wasted upon the pedestal in the piazza," she exclaimed. "Fix them in one of my apartments in the palace, where they will be honoured and appreciated."

Cellini objected; but the duchess would not yield, while the duke expressed no opinion.

The next day, Cellini, having ascertained that the duke and the duchess had gone for a long ride together, had the little figures carried to the Loggia de Lanzi, where the pedestal was already standing, and he soldered them firmly with lead into the niches prepared for them.

"Oh, when the duchess knew of this, how angry she was!" says Cellini. So irate was she that she managed to put a stop to the joint restorations of statuettes by her husband and Cellini.

When the Perseus had been erected, the duke greatly annoyed Cellini by asking him to partially uncover it, before "some trifles of gold, varnish, and various other little finishings" had been added to it. Once more Cellini cursed the unhappy day on which he had left France for Florence. But the moment after the statue had been uncovered, "a shout of

boundless enthusiasm in commendation of" the work went up from the crowd of critics, who had been anxiously awaiting their first view of it.

It was then the fashion to affix sonnets, in praise or dispraise, to newly exposed statues; and twenty "overflowing with the highest panegyrics" were nailed to the door of the scaffolding about the Perseus before the day was over. What pleased Cellini most were the verbal eulogies of Pontormo and his pupil, Bronzino.[1] Pontormo was as kindly and pleasant-mannered and modest as Bandinelli was ill-natured, disagreeable, and conceited; nor did Bandinelli fail to say his unkind word on this occasion.

"I am glad that poor Cellini should have this trifling and temporary gratification," said he, "for, when the whole of the Perseus is seen, the critics will be ready enough to point out its defects.

When, however, the great day of the unveiling took place,[2] the enormous crowd assembled in the piazza belauded it with one voice, and the day was spent in extolling the merits of the statue (see plate xvii.) and of the sculptor. To crown the happiness of Cellini, the Grand Duke announced that he was about to reward him in a manner that would astound him.

A full criticism of the Perseus is unnecessary in these pages, and it may be sufficient to observe that some authorities greatly prefer the figure in the small waxen design for it made by Cellini, now in the National Museum at Florence; while others admire still more the spirited little bronze in the same museum, believed by some[3] to have been made for

[1] Vasari, iv., pp. 371-8.

[2] 27th April, 1554.

[3] See Plon, p. 338.

Alinari Photo.

THE PERSEUS.
By Cellini, in the Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence.

the Grand Duchess as a consolation for her disappointment in not obtaining the small figures at the base of the large bronze in the Loggia. There is no evidence, however, absolutely authenticating this beautiful statuette.

CHAPTER XI.

THE END.

PREPARED by the duke's own message to be astonished, Cellini would not have been surprised however large the present that might be sent to him.

Nevertheless he was destined to be both surprised and astonished; for the ducal secretary, Giacopo Guidi, afterwards Bishop of Penna, came to Cellini and said, "The duke wants you to tell him how much you ask for your Perseus".

Dumbfounded and exasperated, Cellini replied that it was not his habit to put prices on his work, that the duke had promised him a reward, and that that sufficed. The secretary peremptorily ordered him to name his price, observing that, unless he did so, his excellency would be gravely displeased. After considerable pressure Cellini said that, if he were to receive 10,000 crowns he would be underpaid. Upon this the secretary began to abuse him, and Cellini "gave it him back again".

The next day Cellini went to the duke, who opened the conversation by remarking that "with 10,000 ducats cities and great palaces are built".

"Your excellency can find multitudes of men who could build cities and palaces," replied Cellini; "but you will not find one man in the world who could make another Perseus." And forthwith he left the duke's presence in high dudgeon.

The Grand Duchess heard of this unpleasant interview, and, a few days later, she summoned Cellini to her presence. Then she began by recommending him to place his disagreement with the duke unreservedly in her own hands, promising to manage the affair to his entire satisfaction; but, having hitherto regarded her rather as an enemy than as a friend, he felt no confidence in her professions of goodwill, and was foolish enough to pretend that the duke's favour was all he cared for, that money was nothing to him, and so on. The duchess smiled and said :—

"Benvenuto, you would do well to act as I advise you". Perceiving, however, that he showed no symptoms of trusting her, she went away highly offended.

"It turned out," says Cellini, "that I had done the worst for myself, because, albeit she had harboured some angry feelings towards me, she had in her a certain way of dealing which was generous."

Her reason for wishing to negotiate the affair was that she knew that Bandinelli valued the Perseus at even a higher price than the 10,000 ducats which Cellini had suggested, and she would generously have pressed her husband to give it, if Cellini had exhibited any faith in her overtures. Events, very shortly afterwards, made this clear to Cellini.

Cosimo was very irate about his recent interview with Cellini. "For less than two farthings," said he to a courtier, "I would throw Perseus to the dogs, and so our differences would be ended."

And now Cellini did another foolish thing. Having refused to entrust the settlement of the payment for the Perseus to the Grand Duchess, he placed the matter

in the hands of one of his familiar acquaintances,[1] who was related to the duke on the mother's side. This well-meaning but injudicious friend ended by agreeing with the Grand Duke that Cellini should be satisfied with 3500 golden crowns, provided they were given as a mere acknowledgment, and not as payment, the duke's favour being understood to be the only reward that Cellini desired.

Having so often gone through the farce of pretending that the Duke's pleasure was his only object, Cellini had no right to complain at being taken at his word; but he was, in fact, bitterly mortified by this bargain. When the duchess heard of it, she said: "It would have been better for poor Benvenuto if he had entrusted the matter to me".

The payment, even of the 3500, came in very slowly, and Cellini complained to Duke Cosimo, who thereat "flew into the greatest rage conceivable".

"You let yourself be blinded by mere cupidity," said he. "I will have the Perseus valued and will give you only what the experts think it worth."

"Since there is not a man in Florence who could make the Perseus, how can there be one who could value it?" inquired Cellini angrily.

"There *is* a man in Florence who could make such a statue; and, therefore, he well knows how to value it," replied the duke. He meant Bandinelli, and of this Cellini felt pretty certain.

Cellini then said that, were Bronzino a sculptor, he might possibly produce such a statue, and that if Michael Angelo were not too old he would be able

[1] Girolamo degli Albizzi. He was godfather to one of Cellini's children.

to equal it; but that, as things were, "no man known on earth could have produced his Perseus". At the same time he pretended to be above all sordid considerations of money. To so high-minded a man the praise of his excellency was sufficient payment, nay over-payment. Let the Grand Duke keep his money to spend upon himself!

"Probably you think I have not got the money to pay you!" said the duke angrily.

Ignoring this remark, Cellini again protested that the praise of Duke Cosimo was ample remuneration, adding, "With that to console me I shall leave Florence this instant, never to set foot in it again".

"You had better not!" replied the duke in stern anger.

Cellini admits that, at this, he was "half terrified," and he followed the duke into the palace. There he soon learned that Cosimo had commissioned the Archbishop of Pisa and one of his other officials to send for Bandinelli and order him to set a price upon the Perseus.

Cellini indignantly declared that nothing would induce him to be paid at Bandinelli's valuation of his work, and of this the Grand Duke was duly informed.

Bandinelli, when questioned by the commissioners, said: "I have examined the statue minutely, and know well enough what it is worth; but, having been on bad terms with Cellini for some time past, I do not want to be entangled in his affairs".

The commissioners told him that the duke commanded him to value it. Bandinelli then said that he did not think that 16,000 crowns would be too high a price for it.

On hearing this the duke "was mightily enraged"; as also was Cellini at having lost so good a bargain by refusing to accept Bandinelli's valuation.

"I will only add," says Cellini, "that I ought to have trusted to the duchess's intervention, for then I should have been quickly paid, and should have received so much more into the bargain."

It may as well be said here that, so far as can be ascertained, the last few hundred ducats of even the 3500 which the Grand Duke had agreed to give for the Perseus were never paid. Cellini, however, does not tell us that at about this time he was made a member of the Florentine nobility. This honour was probably granted to him as part of his recompense for the Perseus; and, to a man in his position, this alone was no small reward. In his complaints against the Grand Duke respecting the paucity of his remuneration, it was scarcely honest in Cellini to be silent about the reception of such a favour.

If Bandinelli were guilty of trying to take away commissions from others, neither was Cellini innocent in this respect. The duke had ordered Bandinelli to make a large statue of Neptune, and an enormous block of marble had been brought up the Arno for the purpose. Cellini knew all about this, and he went to Duke Cosimo and assured him that the method by which his ancestors had brought the Florentine art to the highest pitch of perfection had been the throwing of all commissions open to competition.

"I know very well what you are aiming at," said the duchess, who happened to be present. "You want to have that block of marble taken from Bandinelli

and to make the Neptune yourself. Never mention it again in my presence."

"If your excellencies are resolved to leave the work to Bandinelli, he would be instigated to display still greater art and science by competition," pleaded Cellini.

"Ask the duke," said the duchess.

"Twenty years ago I had that block of marble quarried for Bandinelli, and he shall have it," observed the Grand Duke. Yet, after a long conversation, Cellini actually persuaded Cosimo to countermand the order to Bandinelli, and to throw the execution of the work open to competition. Small wonder then, that, as Cellini puts it, "the duchess tossed her head defiantly, and muttered I know not what angry sentences".

Now Cellini had for two years been at work on a life-sized crucifix, the figure being of white, and the cross of black marble, which he valued at 2000 crowns. Not long after the above conversation, Cellini tried to bribe the duchess by presenting her with this crucifix, saying: "All I ask is that your excellency will not use your influence either against or for the models which the duke has ordered to be made of the Neptune".

She replied, with "mighty indignation": "So then you value neither my help nor my opposition".

"On the contrary, I value them so highly that I am offering you, princess, what I value at 2000 ducats," was Cellini's response.

The duchess very properly refused the proffered bribe, in what Cellini describes as "a half-angry mood".

Soon afterwards, Bandinelli died; and Cellini says,

with evident satisfaction and not a little ill-nature, that "in addition to his intemperate habits of life, the mortification of having probably to lose the marble contributed to his decline".

The duchess now announced that, even as she had protected Bandinelli in life, so would she protect his memory in death; and that Cellini should neither make the Neptune nor have the block of marble. News very soon afterwards came to Cellini that the order had been assigned to Bartolommeo Animanato, a sculptor who had worked under Bandinelli.

"Unhappy piece of stone!" exclaimed Cellini. "In the hands of Bandinelli it would have fared badly enough, but in those of Ammanato its fate will be a hundred times worse."

Yet Cellini, after all, obtained the order for the unlucky Neptune, only, however, to lose it; for, as will presently appear, he fell ill, and during his long illness the Neptune and the marble were both transferred to Ammanato. To finish the Neptune story it is necessary to say that, some time later, the duchess for the first time saw Cellini's model for the Neptune, when she exclaimed, "Upon my life, I never dreamed it could be one-tenth part so beautiful!" and she expressed a wish that Cellini should have a block of marble quarried to his taste and then execute the work.

Once more Cellini offered the crucifix to the duchess, not as a bribe this time, and again she refused it; but the duke purchased it for 1500 golden crowns,[1] and he promised Cellini plenty of orders and the means of executing them.

[1] He placed it in the Pitti Palace. It is now in the church of S. Lorenzo, in the Escurial at Madrid.

Here a last word shall be said of the duchess, with whom Cellini had so many quarrels. A manuscript history[1] of the grand duke's family states that, almost immediately after the events just described, Cosimo went to Pisa with his wife and his two sons, Cardinal Giovanni and Don Garzia de' Medici. When out hunting there, Giovanni and Garzia quarrelled about a goat, and Garzia gave his brother, the cardinal, a sword-wound in the thigh, from which he died a few days later. Cellini says that he died of a "pestilential fever," and this was the story published at the time. Symonds, contrary to the opinion of Napier in his *Florentine History*, believes Cellini's account, and considers the other version to be popular fiction.

The manuscript proceeds to say that the cardinal had been Cosimo's favourite son—Cellini calls him "the duke's right eye, handsome and good"—and that the duchess recommended her son, Don Garzia, to throw himself upon his knees before his father and beg his forgiveness. This advice, it tells us, Don Garzia followed; but, instead of forgiving his son, the duke drew his sword and killed him there and then. On hearing of this, says the narrative, the grand duchess took to her bed and died of grief.

It was not until a dozen years later that Cosimo himself was brought to his end by the more prosaic means of a somewhat lax life as a widower, chronic gout, and successive attacks of apoplexy. Historians may accuse him of having changed the condition of the Florentines from freedom to slavery. If this be true, it is equally true that he found them in war and want, and left them in peace and plenty. He began

[1] See Napier's *Florentine History*, v., pp. 226-30.

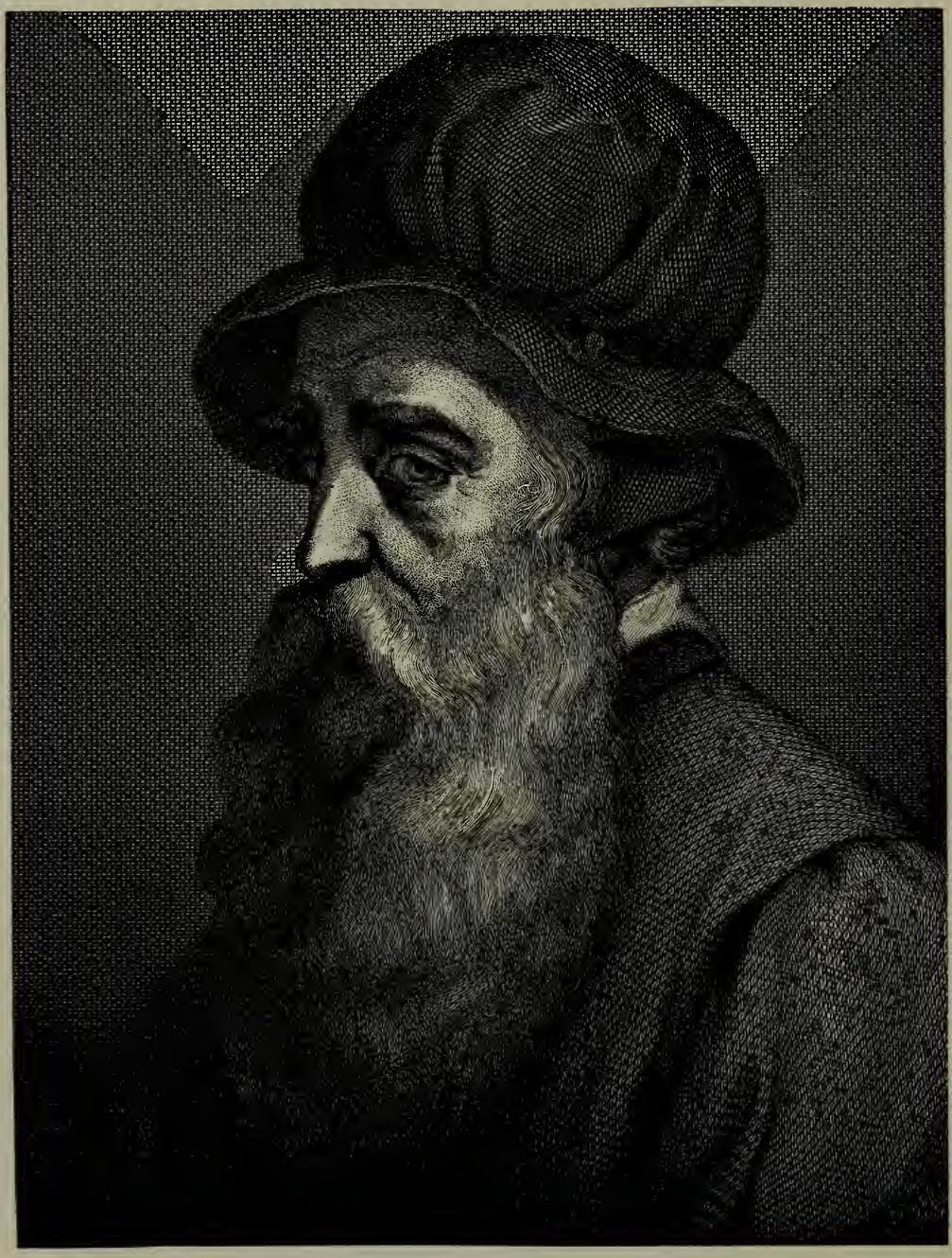
his life, as a ruler, in a Florence feeble and despised; he ended it in a Florence respected and even courted by the greatest potentates in Europe.

It has been found convenient to anticipate in this chapter; but we must now return to explain the nature of the illness which, as has been said, incapacitated Cellini while at work on the Neptune, and was the cause of that work being transferred to other hands.

Two brothers, a priest and a farmer, near relations of his friend Guido Guidi, the physician, offered Cellini a life annuity in return for an advance of money. This offer Cellini accepted; but the two brothers soon grew tired of paying the annuity, and endeavoured to put an end to the contract by giving the annuitant a poisoned salad. This failed to kill Cellini; but it took him more than a year to shake off the effects of the poison. Some good, nevertheless, came of the evil; for, says Cellini, the poison "sufficed to cleanse me of a mortal viscosity from which I suffered . . . [so] that whereas, before I took it, I had perhaps but three or four years to live, I verily believe now it has helped me to more than twenty years by bettering my condition".

Although he candidly admits his first imprisonment in Rome, Cellini conceals from his readers the fact of his having been twice imprisoned[1] about two years after the unveiling of the Perseus. Perhaps the accusations which led to his incarcerations might not have tended to his credit, and Symonds says[2] that "passages in his poems and petitions make it

[1] See Bianchi, p. 593.
[2] *Life of Cellini*, p. 448.



Benvenuto Cellini.
Engraved by Jesi, after Vasari.

probable that on at least one of these occasions he was accused of criminal immorality".

It may be that, after the death of the duchess, the Grand Duke took less interest than before in works of art. At any rate from that date he appears to have given no more commissions to Cellini. Constant bickerings, however, continued between them concerning payment for work already done ; and, in the last year of his life, Cellini demanded further payment for his restoration of the Ganymede, claiming 300 crowns as the proper charge, whereas the experts would only allow it to be 80.[1]

Cellini did not think well to mention, in his autobiography, that he took the tonsure four years before that book was finished. Whether his reason for taking it was to show his intention of living a reformed life, or a desire to proceed further in the ecclesiastical state as time went on, is unknown. The obligations, restrictions, and duties of the first tonsure are exceeding slight and can be very easily remitted, as indeed they were in the case of Cellini, a couple of years later.

In 1564, two years after the conclusion of his autobiography, Cellini married a wife by whom he had two children, a son and a daughter. His wife's name was Piera di Salvadore Parigi ; but little or nothing definite is known about her.

During the last few years of his life (see plate xviii.), Cellini is believed to have received very few orders, and to have executed no works of importance. Possibly increasing ill-health, or more likely increasing ill-temper, or perhaps the lassitude of years, may have

[1] *Archivio delle Revisione dei Sindicati*, ii., p. 78. See Plon, p. 216.

been the cause of this cessation from work ; nor is it improbable that, like many another celebrity, both before his time and after it, he may have gone out of fashion. Whatever the cause, he is said to have relinquished labour for speculation.

There are no interesting details with which to close an account of the life of Benvenuto Cellini. Even the important part which he had been appointed to take as a representative of Sculpture, in the funeral of Michael Angelo at Sta Croce, he could not assume by reason of his ill-health. In 1571 (new style) his own funeral took place,[1] in the church of the Annunziata at Florence, when an oration was delivered "in praise and honour of his life and works, and of the excellent disposition of his soul and body".

To the praise and honour of his life his modern biographers have small cause to contribute ; but they may allow that he would appear to have perpetrated some good works, in the form of generosity, not only to his own relations, but also to those whom he employed and their wives and their children.

One of the reasons sometimes assigned for the superiority of ancient over modern art is that, in our own days of hurry-scurry, artists, like other men, attempt too many things. The history of Benvenuto Cellini is far from supporting this theory. He was a sculptor, an author, a goldsmith, a gunsmith, an engineer, an enameller, an artilleryman, a swordsman, a sportsman, a bronze-caster, a poetaster, and a performer upon the cornet-à-piston.

If it be replied that his multiplicity of employments

[1] He died on 13th February, 1870, old style ; or in 1571, new style.

was probably the cause of his shortcomings as an artist, it may be retorted that Michael Angelo, the sculptor, painter, architect, military engineer, and sonneteer; Leonardo da Vinci, the painter, civil engineer, architect, and author; Albert Dürer, the goldsmith, painter, and engraver, and other fifteenth- and sixteenth-century artists, by no means obeyed the so-called golden rule of "doing one thing well".

Respecting Cellini's views of art, it is not proposed to add much here; but the following short passage from his own writings is worthy of quotation:— [1]

"I would take this opportunity, gentle reader, of bidding you bear in mind that all really great masters have followed the life, but the point is that you must have a fine judgment to know how the best of life is to be put into your work. You must always be on the look-out for beautiful human beings, and from among them choose the most beautiful; and, not only so, you must from among even these choose the most beautiful parts, and so will your whole composition become an abstraction of what is beautiful. So alone may work be created that shall be evident at once as a labour of men both exquisite in judgment and humble in study."

Surely something else is wanting besides all this; and it is possible to have the "labour of men both exquisite in judgment and humble in study," where some of these attributes are wanting. As an example, and in violent contrast to Cellini, let us recall to our minds the works of Fra Angelico, an artist eminently "humble in study," yet "exquisite in judgment". Now Fra Angelico, with all his merits,

[1] *Treatises*, p. 140.

cannot truthfully be said to have "followed the life," or to have chosen the most beautiful parts from various subjects in order to compose "an abstraction of what is beautiful". In comparison with the anatomy of Cellini, the anatomy of Fra Angelico is very faulty. Yet there is a charm in an angel of Angelico which is altogether absent in Cellini's Nymph of Fontainebleau, as well as in the uncomfortably seated nude female of his golden salt-cellar. And even in his very best work, to whatever extent he might excite admiration, Cellini was powerless

> To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
> To raise the genius, and to mend the heart.[1]

The aim in Cellini's works was to be either "splendid" or "exquisite" rather than to be graceful or delicate. There was a want of refinement in his overcrowded detail, a want of repose in the constraint of his postures, a want of modesty in his ostentatious parade of its opposite, a want of order and of proportion in the attenuation of some of his figures and in the heavy clumsiness of others.

But if Cellini was in many respects a second-rate artist, he was a first-rate craftsman. His magnificent bronze of the Perseus is a triumph of handling and of casting; his bust of Cosimo de' Medici is as life-like and expressive as it is perfect in workmanship; his treatment of the Ganymede furnishes the finest example extant of the combination of modern, or comparatively modern, with ancient statuary; and it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that his greyhound is the most anatomically correct repre-

[1] Pope. Prologue to *Cato*.

sentation of a dog which appeared before the time of Landseer. If there be not a single authenticated specimen of his jewellery or of his lighter gold and silver plate, no higher criticism could be given to it than the tradition which has been handed down from his own days to ours, that the best and the finest Italian examples of sixteenth century goldsmith's work, when not definitely proved to be the work of others, should be attributed to Benvenuto Cellini.

It is a hackneyed saying that the autobiography of Cellini throws an interesting sidelight upon the history of his times. This is an obvious truism; but it is equally true that few things are more misleading than sidelights on history if taken by themselves. An accumulation of sidelights, provided they come from different directions, is invaluable to the historical student; but it should not be forgotten that even such an accumulation does not constitute history. It only clarifies it.

Difficult enough to any writer, however unprejudiced and personally unconcerned, is the task of giving a thoroughly impartial opinion of events which are past; but if there ever existed a writer above others in whom the nicely balanced judgment, the cool and unimpassioned criticism, the unbiassed and disinterested opinion, so necessary in a historian, are conspicuous by their absence, that writer was Benvenuto Cellini.

There can be little doubt that, in Cellini's autobiography, there are many specimens of peculiar, almost phenomenal, and even interesting lying. So much, however, of what he tells us undoubtedly happened that his writings are all the more dangerous;

for, if in the main he intended to tell the truth, there can be little question that, whenever he found it convenient, he did not hesitate to mislead his readers with highly coloured realities, distorted facts, misquoted conversations, wrongly imputed motives, and falsely drawn inferences.

Perhaps a fanciful, though not very erroneous analysis of the value of Cellini's statements might be made as follows: 50 per cent. of the tolerable truthfulness of the good story-teller, 25 per cent. of the quasi-veracity of the gossiping letter-writer, 15 per cent. of the quasi-mendacity of the man with a grievance, and 10 per cent. of the unqualified mendacity of a deliberate liar of a somewhat rare but particularly morbid and malignant character. And, after all, was Pascal very far wrong when, in assuming the part of spokesman for mankind in general, he said:[1] "We are altogether untruth, duplicity, and contradiction, and we even try to hide and disguise ourselves from ourselves!"

Whatever may have been the faults of Benvenuto Cellini, this at least may be said of him, that no other character known to history was at the same time so skilful and so ready with his chisel, his pen, and his poignard.

[1] *Pensées*, lxiv., Sidney Lear's translation.

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